

He will
come.

TYNG





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1877a

HE WILL COME;

OR,

MEDITATIONS UPON THE RETURN OF THE LORD JESUS
CHRIST TO REIGN OVER THE EARTH,

By STEPHEN H. TYNG, Jr., D.D.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

By STEPHEN H. TYNG, D.D.,

Rector of St. George's Church, New York City.

"Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not
tarry."—*Hebrews x., 37.*

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Preface.

Every beam from the sun is a sheaf of rays. The fields of light are fully harvested by the Father of lights. And the gleaner has no scattered glories to gather. In each bundle, so delicately intertwined by the Divine hand as to evade superficial analysis, are interwoven illumination, heat and chemical force. These combine to reveal beauty to the eye, repair the waste of the body and prepare food for every form of life. They bring us strange stories of the worlds beyond us in space. The spectrum compels the sunshine to tell out the secrets of the soil, from which it sprang. The very materials, of which the great luminary is composed, are tested by the crystal prism. The mercury measures the heat, which, after so weary a journey, is transferred by each twisted ray from the unsearchable fires, that surge over the surface of the solar sphere. The storehouse of the coal-mine, the garden of herbs, the trees of the forest and the health of man are replenished and inspired by the fire from afar. The chemist in his laboratory and the farmer in the field are ever seizing and sowing again the germs of vital force received from the heavens. Every opening bud blesses in its bloom these peculiar influences of the sky. The arts enslave the sun, even to the bondage of photography, and make the income of his ceaseless harvest the spring of luxury and life.

All these principles are banded together in every glinting of glory from that world, whose best name is "harvest-home."

And be thou sure, what tint so'er
The broken rays beneath may wear,
It needs them all, that, broad and white,
God's love may weave the perfect light.

The truth of a self-revealing God is our Great Light in the spiritual life. Every inspired passage had its birth and received its body of words in the mind of the All-Wise. These texts of scripture are sheaves of the first fruits, grouped and given to us by the hand of Divine Grace. We wave them in praise before God, as did Israel of old, and feast upon the fatness of the land, from whence they have been gathered. What manifestations of the nature, perfections, purposes, will or work of our reconciled Father and God does each verse make to the trustful soul. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Faith reaps the fulness of the field. The figure of the sunshine is justified in the promises of Divine fidelity. They shine like a light in a dark place. All illumination of the eyes of our understanding, and every inspiration of our life can come from this source alone. Others may delight in the rays of prophecy which are intermingled with the promises, as revelations of the purposes of Him who is a "consuming fire." But there is no spiritual force in such study. It is more like that knowledge which "puffeth up." Still others may with subtle speculation seek to separate the principles of the Word, never satisfied until they can dogmatize, like philosophers, about the measure and method of the properties of growth in each truth. But wiser far are they, who, "called out of darkness into marvellous light" determine with full surrender of self to "walk before God in the light

of the living." They will find both heat and force in the brightness of the Divine assurance. Not one blessing can be lost, if escaping from the darkness of doubt and the dungeons of discontent and despair, the Christian basks in the shine of the promises, which "are yea and amen in Christ Jesus."

This book is offered to every reader as a trap to catch such sunbeams. The purpose of the author has been an exposition of "the promise of His coming," as the revelation of the will of God. With the intricate questions and correspondences of prophecy he does not intermeddle. Every thought, that tempts the mind from the Glorious Saviour, works an eclipse of a promise. And the author is convinced that all the perversions of the doctrine of the pre-Millennial Appearing of our Lord, which have done so much to discredit the truth, will on examination be found to have had this as their initial point of departure. In contrast with all such discussions of prophecy, this book has a defined mission. If the Spirit of God shall employ it as a mirror to reflect in ever so partial a manner, the glory of Jesus, the prayers, which accompany its publication, will be echoed in the thanksgivings of "all them that love His appearing."

"Glory to Thee by all be given ;—
Of light the light, in earth and heaven ;
Of joys the joy, of suns the sun,
Jesus, the Father's chosen One."

CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY,
New York City,
April 2d, 1877.

THOU ART THE KING OF GLORY, O
Christ.

Thou art the everlasting Son of the
Father,

When thou tookest upon thee to deliver
man, thou didst humble thyself to
be born of a Virgin.

When thou hadst overcome the sharp-
ness of death, thou didst open the
Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

Thou sittest at the right hand of God.
in the Glory of the Father.

We believe that thou shalt come to be
our Judge.

We therefore pray thee, help thy ser-
vants, whom thou hast redeemed
with thy precious blood.

Make them to be numbered with thy
Saints, in glory everlasting. AMEN.

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Introduction.



HAVE read the work, which is here presented to the public attention, with great satisfaction. It presents views of Divine truth, and of the purposes and promises of the Divine revelation, which I was personally led to adopt, many years since, with entire conviction and with great thankfulness. The certainty of this personal and premillennial advent of the Gracious Saviour of men, to accomplish the purposes of his redemption, and to establish his promised kingdom on the earth, seems to me indubitable. Its "times and seasons, the Father hath put in his own power." Christian duty and hope depend not upon a minute revelation of these. But the reality of this

promised manifestation, and the dependence of so many events and results of unspeakable importance, upon the fact of this glorious appearance, give a practical character and influence to the event, which should, and will, fasten the attention of believers in the gospel, and in the inspiration of the scriptures, more and more earnestly and constantly upon it.

This "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ," must have the effect, under the teaching and power of the Spirit, to lead us to a "sober and godly living in this present world," "that we may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless, and a peculiar people, zealous of good works," in the hour of His appearing.

The instructive method of consideration, and the constant practical reference to the words of holy scripture in relation to this great and precious subject, which have been so faithfully pursued in the accompanying volume, lead me earnestly to commend it, and to anticipate for it, an adaptation to practical usefulness, which I am sure our gracious Lord will be pleased to grant to it, with His own

favor and blessing. The size of this volume will hardly allow a complete and exhaustive discussion of this most important subject, as a fact, but will give the opportunity and the inducement for a serious and affectionate consideration of the practical topics and suggestions, and of the motive to Christian duty and usefulness, which it so clearly contains. And it will thus be practically and effectively useful to the plainest reader of the Word of God, in its English translation.

The value of such an influence and result, cannot be too highly estimated. To live, in the constant remembrance of this promised coming of the Lord, is a high and precious attainment for every disciple, under His guidance. It is really to live as in His sight, under the constant supervision of His unerring watchfulness; keeping in exercise the strongest motives to a life of holiness, and a walk of usefulness, in every appointed relation of earthly life.

Thus our Lord Himself applies this great fact of His certain, but unlimited advent—St. Mark xiii., 35: “Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning;

lest coming suddenly, He find you sleeping; and what I say unto you I say unto all, WATCH!"

In this aspect, as a motive to human obligation and duty, the earnest consideration of this certain, but unknown Advent of our Lord becomes of incalculable importance.

And if the work here presented, shall be made, in any degree, to encourage and maintain, such effective and constant watchfulness and earnestness, in the Christian life, of those who read it, the highest aspirations of the author must meet their noblest and most important reward.

STEPHEN H. TYNG.

St. George's Rectory, New York, March, 1877.

I.

The Two Advents.

The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.—Titus ii., 11-13.



THE first Sunday in the ecclesiastical year of the Protestant Episcopal Church is called "Advent." It records and prophecies the coming of Christ Jesus, the Saviour and King, into a world, which He hath redeemed and over which He will reign. Between these two appearings of the same person we are passing our lives of privilege and responsibility. "The grace that bringeth salvation" is an inalienable possession of every

believer. "The glorious appearing" is the coming sun-rise for which, as a watcher in the night, he is "waiting" and "looking." His life is preserved and protected under the double and commingled shadow of a cross and a throne. His sins are covered by the first, and his infirmities and shortcomings are compensated by the second. Absolute salvation is his assurance. Already has his person been judged in the dying of the Lord Jesus, who, "now once in the end of the world, hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."* With delight may he desire the promised descent of his Judge and King, for, "unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation."† The intervening or succeeding judgment, has for him no terrors, since "there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit."‡

Advent testifies to Jesus Christ. He is the first. He is the beginning of the creation of God. He is the first-born among many brethren. He is the source of all grace. He is the author and finisher of our faith. He is the chief among ten thousand,

* Heb. ix., 26. † Heb. ix., 28. ‡ Rom. viii., 1.

the one altogether lovely. He is the first and the last, the all and in all. To His coming in the weakness of the flesh all profane history looked forward for its date. Julius Cæsar lived so many years before Christ; and every calendar of later generations confesses the *Annum Domini*—the year of the Lord—as the initial point of all its calculations. This is Christ's place in the history of the world.

His coming to die was the long-deferred anticipation of the multitudes in the Jewish Church, who, like aged Simeon, waited for the consolation of Israel, and then sang their song of departure. Their confidence found that day at Bethlehem its divinely appointed justification. In the birth of Jesus all faith, from Abel's to Simeon's, centered and was glorified.

But our present faith is retrospective. It recognizes that coming as an historical fact, in which are bound up all the privileges, to which the believer can either aspire or attain. The generations since the beginning of this Christian Era have drawn all their love and joy and peace and inspiration from that solitary old-time manifestation of Jesus Christ. Therefore does this church of

ours place before all other truth, before every other scheme of discipline, before all reminders of privilege and duty, before the marvels which the Holy Ghost afterwards reveals and applies, this event of events. The voice of the church is, 'Let Advent be file-leader of the festivals.'

The first coming of Jesus Christ is the warrant for our faith, the reason of our hope, and the inspiration of our love. The traveler who ascends the Righi extends his horizon. While the inhabitants of the Swiss valleys are in darkness, he is welcoming the sun. His face is already glistening with the glory of the new day. The air that he breathes is full of life. He must sing for joy over the deliverance from night, and the earnest of the perfect day, that he receives with the dawn. He, who by faith dwells in the high places of a finished salvation through the birth, obedience, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth, knows the fact of which this is but a figure. Too many are content with the shadow of the cross. This is indeed a great benefit. But there is somewhat better than this in the sacrifice of our Saviour. It may become to all an observatory.

Stand firmly upon it, and mark how the shades of darkness and doubt are growing thinner as "the day of the Lord is at hand." Praise the Christ of the past! Proclaim the coming Christ!

The Advent season is a reminder of this second equally important fact, that our Lord Jesus Christ will return to this earth. His second visit holds precisely the same relation to the culminating events of His kingdom as did His first coming to the work of His redemption. In that advent of glory all the prophecies find their point of union, and from that coming all privileges in the millennial kingdom, and the dispensations beyond, derive their brightness and power. In the face of all evasions of the literal language of God's Word, of all the cavils of man's doubting unbelief, of false and intrusive interpretations of prophecies, which would assign the day, and thus divert the minds of the faithful from the Word of God itself, in contradiction of all these opposing influences, this church of ours speaks out among the churches in its testimony to the second coming of Jesus Christ. In creed, we profess "He shall come again;" in the constitution of the seasons we declare, we "look for

the Lord," that blessed hope; in collect we pray that "at Thy second coming to judge the world" we may be found an acceptable people in Thy sight; and in article we testify that "He ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until He returns to judge all men at the last day." There can be no question what is the doctrine of this church on the second advent of Jesus Christ.

And yet how few among us are like unto men that "wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when He cometh and knocketh they may open unto Him immediately."* "It is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand."† Christian character has lost robustness and soundness. The church and the world are in too close communion. Light is seeking concord with darkness. Belial is fawning before and flattering Christ. It was not so in the early churches. It is not so to-day among those, who, like the Thessalonians, "wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."‡

* Luke xii., 36. † Rom. xiii., 11. ‡ 1 Thess. i., 10.

It will not be so with those of us, who shall together search the Scriptures for the certainty and signs of His appearing. Precious influences and inspirations shall they receive, who shall forecast, through the glass of the Word, their coronation with Christ. Whilst communing, through the promises, with the coming Lord, we shall receive new assurance of our security in His blood and unconscious conformity to His likeness. To endeavor, to dare, to endure, these are three parts of Christian life which must have the love of His sacrifice for their constraint and longing for His appearing as their expression and compensation. In every act of each day of all believers are the two advents of Jesus conjoined. "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

* 1 Peter i., 13.

What is our sweetest joy?
Beloved companion say;
What our delightful, best employ,
Untiring, free from all alloy,
In this dark, cloudy day?
To speak together of our home,
Looking for him who soon will come.

Where do our spirits find
Refreshment and repose ?
When heart to heart, and mind to mind,
We search those records God designed,
To medicine all our woes ;
And feel, as bright its pages shine,
Each line was traced by Love divine.

We look on all around
As soon to disappear ;
We listen to the tempest's sound,
As wildly now it sweeps around,
Without an anxious fear ;
We hear a voice amidst its swell
Which whispers, " All will soon be well !"


Yes, soon the Lord will come ;
Then will all trouble cease ;
Earth's kingdoms will His own become ;
Proud Anti-Christ will meet his doom ;
All will be joy and peace :
These very storms prepare His way,
And usher in that glorious day.

C. ELLIOTT.

II.

The Glorious Appearing.

I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.—1 Cor. i., 4-8.



OUR confidence in prophecy depends upon the observed correspondence between past predictions and their fulfilment. If the life of Jesus Christ in the flesh does not echo the voice of prophecy from the first declaration in the garden down to the last expression of Malachi, then there is no basis of belief or hope for the second coming of our Lord. But if, according to all the gospels, Jesus did this thing and that thing, the

third thing, and hundreds of things, in order "that the scriptures might be fulfilled," if there be such an agreement between the fact and the fulfilment as no impostor could create, and no fraud could afterwards in the record interpolate, then have we a solid ground, upon which our faith may rest in the expectation of His coming again. This we assume, having reason for the conviction.

The laws of interpretation, which prevail in a true exposition of prophecy, when clearly ascertained, may be applied to unfulfilled prophecy, for that which is accomplished and that which yet awaits its fulfilment stand side by side in the same chapter, and often in the same verse. To deny to such connected testimonies of God a common rule of interpretation would manifestly be to "handle the Word of God deceitfully." Moreover, it could only result in forcing those, who refuse to construe the language of the Bible according to the accepted principles of all literature, to admit the most disastrous errors. The ruin of souls is involved in the rejection of the literal rendering of all scriptures. What right have we to insist that His coming judgment of sinners is to be a fact, if

we assert that "the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory,"* is only a figure of the incursion of the Roman emperor, Titus, at the head of an army. The Universalist may be right after all, if God did not literally say what He meant. Then again, to resolve the repeated announcements of His future advent into a figurative prediction of the extending power of the gospel in the conversion of the world, is to open the way for a parallel claim by the Unitarian, that His manifold declarations of His equality and oneness with the Father were only another mode of illustrating His spotless integrity as a man. The truth of God is at stake instantly we wander from the natural and rhetorical rendering of the Word of God. There are doubtless in the Bible many metaphors and similes, but there are universally accepted rules for their exposition. These and these only can be justly and safely applied. The danger and impiety of adding to or taking away from the words of this prophecy are unspeakable. Let us fear the consequences of Uzzah's sin. The tottering ark is in the keeping

* Matt. xxiv., 30.

of God. Better that it should seem for a time to tremble than that the church should be taught to presume. "The wisdom of God is wiser than men." We turn to the Word of God for our warrant. If this book speaks, let all keep silent. If this book be silent, let no one dare to speak. Let our expectation be according to the mind of the Spirit.

The student of the scriptures must recognize the gradual development of dispensation after dispensation in the unfolding of prophecy. Let us stand for a moment in the light of the early prediction in the garden to the fallen parents of our race. A son should be given to them, and by their seed their enemy should not only be bruised, but destroyed. That single prophecy grew in the manifold words of the Spirit, through other revealers, until at last we have the full description, in Isaiah, of this glorious Messiah, in His sufferings and His triumph. These are so clearly recorded, that the book reads like history, rather than prediction. This was the first object of faith through all the dispensations—a Saviour that was to come, and to be crucified, to "be cut off, but not

for Himself." But all the prophecies do not agree in such a declaration, for beyond and behind the cross there is a throne. Glory is in the future; and faith, rivetting its gaze upon a crucified and rejected Christ, is beckoned on with curiosity to examine something in distant cloud-land, that is yet to be made more plain. When Jesus the Master had come, in His worn and weary form, in His life of constant toil and trial, when He had accomplished the purpose of His mission in the crucifixion on Golgotha, then read we clearly of that cloud-land. Now the throne takes shape. Now hope may go forward in its excursions of delight, and sit at the feet of "the Lamb as it had been slain, in the midst of the throne." Now faith may lay hold of the assured promises that this King shall reign upon the earth. But beyond this second coming and glorious dominion, another cloud-land, which we call heaven, stretches out. Tell me, what do you know about heaven? What can you learn from this Word of God about heaven? It is to "be present with the Lord,"* "to be with Christ, which is far better."† Beyond such general expressions,

* 2 Cor. v., 8. † Phil. i., 23.

and many gorgeous emblems, we have positively no description of the land that is very far off. Well and wisely sang Keble :

What is the heaven our God bestows?
No prophet yet, no angel knows;
Was never yet created eye
Could see across Eternity;
Not seraph's wing, forever soaring,
Can pass the flight of souls adoring;
That nearer still, and nearer grow
To the unapproached Lord, once made for them so low.

We have the most indistinct revelation of that dispensation, which is to succeed the millennium; but on almost every page of the New Testament have we plain teaching about the coming of Christ to reign, and to judge the children of men. Who can tell whether this Bible is complete? Perfect it is for this dispensation. Even as when Malachi closed the Old Testament canon, why may not a Newer Apocalypse be added to John's Revelation, when, under the crown of Jesus, we submit ourselves, and enter into His glory! Then the rest that remaineth for the people of God, which is now so shadowy, shall be clearly defined, even as the second coming of Christ is now made most plain.

The Lord's promise to his disciples was not

heaven, but His own re-appearing with glory. His latter words at the Last Supper had this return for their topic. Until the society of believers had been sifted by the withdrawal of Judas, He spake not a word about the future triumph. When "the son of perdition" had gone out into the dark, He opened the secrets of His purpose: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself."* "I go away, and come again unto you."† "A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and, again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father."‡ "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."§ The book of Acts is full of intimations that this re-appearance of the Lord was the continual anticipation of the first Christians. St. Paul wrote his epistles to the Thesalonians before all the others which bear his name. In them he recapitulates His preaching at Thessalonica and its results: "Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven."|| Even heathen were

* John xiv., 2, 3. † *ib.*, 28. ‡ John xvi., 16. § *ib.*, 22. || 1 Thess. i., 9, 10.

told the blessed hope, and young believers rejoiced in its assurance.

It is doubtless true that generations have "fallen on sleep," who waited to receive a deathless transfer to "the Father's house." Disappointment has been the history of the watching church. His coming has been possible at any time. Its probability grows with every generation. The parables contain very plain intimations that the time of the Lord's appearing might be delayed. Had this fact, as we now recognize it, been more openly told, all generations previous to the last would have been defrauded of that powerful motive, which is suggested by the immediate nearness of the returning Lord. And yet it was not our Master's purpose to make an error the source of our constraint in the Christian life. But it is an essential element of the truth that He may be now "at the door." This imminence of the appearing is to be recognized by every age. There is never to be more than "a moment, the twinkling of an eye," between the widowed and the wedded condition of the church of Christ. This moment we may be waiting, and the next "caught up together with them in the

clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” *

* 1 Thess. iv., 17.

How long, Oh Lord our Saviour
Wilt Thou remain away?
Some hearts are growing weary,
For Thy so long delay.
Oh, when shall come the moment,
When, brighter far than morn,
The sunlight of Thy glory
Shall on Thy people dawn?

How long, oh heavenly bridegroom,
How long dost thou delay?
And yet, how few are grieving,
That Thou dost absent stay!
Thy very bride her portion
And calling hath forgot,
And seeks for ease and pleasure,
When Thou her Lord art not.

Awake Thy slumbering virgins,
Send forth the solemn cry,
Let all Thy saints repeat it—
The Bridegroom draweth nigh.
Let all our lamps be burning,
Our loins well girded be,
Each eager heart expecting
With joy Thy face to see.

III.

The Man from the Glory.

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly : and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—1 Thess. v., 23.



THE re-appearance of the Man from the Glory is to be manifested in different wise to the waiting believer and to the world. There will intervene a season of great tribulation upon the earth between His coming into the air for His saints and His revelation, with His saints, to those who have proved apostate and rebellious to the Gospel. It is needful that these different parts of the same coming should be carefully discriminated in meditation, if we are to attain correct and profitable knowledge of this wonderful promise. They are distinctly

stated in the Word of God to be separate, the one from the other, and yet to combine in "that blessed hope and the glorious appearing."

How this can be might be illustrated from many passages in history. When Cromwell was the Protector of England the nation's rightful king, by family line, was a fugitive from her shores. The government to which he was born was in the hands of a supplanter. To return and recover his throne was both the promise of the sovereign to his loyal people and the prayer sent by constant messengers from them to him. Their confidence and fidelity were severely tested by his delay. Many gave up the fond hope that his reign would be reëstablished, and swore allegiance to the Commonwealth. To those, who remained faithful, at last he came in utmost secrecy. None others knew that he had crossed the Channel. They continued their careless lives because unconscious of his nearness. Many days were spent by the king in the society of his friends, in the distribution of ranks and rewards, and in the arrangement of his plans for the re-assumption of the crown. At last the day dawned, on which the king was to be proclaimed. Accompanied by those, to whom he had confided his purposes and

assigned stations of authority, and supported by the army prepared to do his bidding, he showed himself openly to the people. "Long live the king!" cried those, who were with him. The people were astounded at the summons. It was his appearing to them, though to the elect from among them he had secretly come a long while before. Thus related will be the portion of the waiting church and the confusion of the godless world. Startling and satisfying events are to occur between His coming stealthily to His people and His revelation in judgment upon the living sinners. With these in mind, the apostle intercedes that the Thessalonian Christians may "be preserved blameless unto the coming." Blessed indeed shall he be who is claimed at the secret visit of the Man from the Glory. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."*

Twelve times after His resurrection did our Lord appear to His disciples. Forty days were thus occupied by Him in the application of His finished salvation to all phases of doubt and devotion.

* Malachi iii., 17.

When this work was accomplished, "He led them out as far as to Bethany; and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven."*

He has gone. Clouds have shut Him from the view of His disciples. The voice of an angel speaks to them in the testimony: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."† He had scarcely left the disciples, they had felt only the first pain of orphanage, they had not begun to realize the promise that they were to be indued with the power of the Holy Ghost, when this comforting assurance of a return in visible manifestation to them is given.

Since that day the Lord's glorified body has been absent from the sight of the Church. The Holy Ghost has indeed taken of the things of Jesus and shown them unto us. The reality of His spiritual nearness, with "two or three gathered together in His name," has been by a great multitude tested and

* Luke xxiv., 50, 51. † Acts i., 11.

enjoyed. Individual believers, in seasons of sickness, sorrow and struggle, have recognized Him, manifested unto them as He doth not manifest Himself unto the world. And yet it is strictly true, that in His glorified humanity, He has never since that day on Olivet, touched this earth. Our confessions of confidence and praise testify: "whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."* Our mutual congratulation and anticipation voice themselves in a like admission: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."† Our sacramental seasons are tokens of a Lord who for a time has withdrawn Himself, and are limited in their observance: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."‡ If it could by any process be proved that the real presence of Christ Jesus' Deity and glorified humanity did ever since the

* 1 Peter i., 8, 9. † 1 John iii., 2. ‡ 1 Cor. xi., 26.

ascension "veil itself," as errorists say, "under the forms of bread and wine," then should we be warranted in discarding the sacrament of the Supper as an ordinance of the believer's life. The memorial of the absent Saviour ceases to be a binding obligation wherever and whenever the miracle of the mass is wrought. "Till He come" are the words, which define its character and describe its continuance. Superstition has feigned that which it cannot find. The Lord's Supper has been perverted from a feast to the embodiment of a presence, because Christians have failed to receive the fact of the removal of the glorified body of Christ to the "right hand of God," and the promise of His visible coming to His church at the close of this dispensation. The truth abides ever, though we prove unbelieving. "He cannot deny Himself."

This secret revelation of the Christ to His chosen ones, is introduced with great frequency among the promises of His appearing. As a preparatory event, which has no immediate relation to the apostate and godless, it is naturally predicted, in connection with the assurances and precepts, which inspire and guard the believer's life. It is a love-message to His

beloved. In close sequence to words of instruction and comfort addressed to those, who were bewailing the death of many friends and bemoaning for such their loss of privilege, since they had "fallen on sleep" before the fulfilment of his appearing, St. Paul wrote: "For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (have the preference over) them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." * How gladdening to a grieving believer is this vista into the future! There is no consolation of God's Word to be compared with it as we carry our dead to God's acre.

Parallel testimonies will be found in other epistles, to which we shall refer hereafter, as illustrations of connected truths. Let us confine ourselves at pres-

* 1 Thess. iv., 15-18.

ent to the words of the Master Himself. The separations to be wrought by this coming for His saints, are graphically sketched by His own predictions: "I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken and the other left."* So silently shall the saints of God be stolen away that the world will for a time be confounded by the number of missing people. The "little flock" will hear the shepherd's voice and follow Him. Search will be made for them, and they cannot be found. The consternation, which such disappearances must cause, will soon cease to control the minds of those, who shall be "left." Everything on earth will speedily become as commonplace as before. Government will not be changed. The courts will still decree judgment among men. The churches will not be emptied. Pews and pulpits will be filled with those who, "having the form of godliness, deny the power thereof."† All these things will soon be sifted by the great tribulation, but at the departure of the saints, godless and

* Luke xvii., 34, 35. † 2 Tim. iii., 5.

anxious men will quickly be consoled, and begin to laugh at their own fears. What a change will it be for those who are taken !

On the eve of His death, our Lord was most explicit in the promise of his re-appearance to His disciples. Over and over again, he told them, "I go away," but He always added the refrain, "I will come again."* That they certainly understood him to pledge his veracity to a literal, personal, visible and special return to them is evidenced by the whole course of their conversation. Had they been wrong in their construction of His words it would seem to be fatal to His trustworthiness that he did not correct their error. But He continued to repeat the promise. We may with absolute confidence anticipate the realization of this appearing, and claim, as the warrant of our expectation, the words of Him, who could not lie: "If it were not so, I would have told you."†

From our Lord's conversation with Peter and John on the shore of the lake of Gennesaret, we have a right to infer that the disciples had an undefined hope that it might be possible to evade death.

* John xiv., 3. † *ib.*, 2.

At least this became the current report about John. It was a misapprehension of the words of our Lord, which suggested this rumor. But the explanation, for which it furnished the occasion, is of great value in support of the views we have been advancing. Peter had been called to follow Christ, and now, turning with over-curiosity towards John, inquired: "Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"* If certainly is demonstrated by this passage that neither His own resurrection nor our death is a fulfilment of His promise: "I will come again." Faith accepts His saying as faithful, and hope looks out through the lattice of the Word and whispers to heaven the unceasing prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Doubt of such a promise is denial of Christ.

Let us not dare, as Christians, to rest in a literal redemption by a literal first coming of Jesus Christ,

* John xxi., 21-23.

our Saviour, if we deny an equally literal second coming of the same Lord to claim His own. The whole mission of Christ stands upon the same principle. It is no more carnal to expect His return in the flesh, than it is to believe that He first came to be the Redeemer of the world. If this Bible is not a book of riddles, to be made that which man's ingenuity can force it to mean, then both of these appearances of Jesus Christ are similar in many of their conditions, and are to be accepted by an equally undoubting faith. As the cross testifies of the condemnation and the rescue of sinners, so does the coming crown of Christ assure the comfortable submission and the future coronation of saints. The cross stands first for the sinner, as his constant object of search. The crown stands first for the saint, as his continual meditation and anticipation.

The Church has waited long
Her absent Lord to see;
And still in loneliness she waits,
A friendless stranger she.
Age after age has gone,
Sun after sun has set,
And still in weeds of widowhood
She weeps a mourner yet.
Come, then, Lord Jesus, come.

Saint after saint on earth
Has lived, and loved, and died ;
And as they left us one by one,
We laid them side by side ;
We laid them down to sleep,
But not in hope forlorn ;
We laid them but to ripen there,
Till the last glorious morn.
Come, then, Lord Jesus, come !

We long to hear Thy voice,
To see Thee face to face,
To share Thy crown and glory then,
As now we share Thy grace.
Should not the loving bride
Thy absent bridegroom mourn ?
Should she not wear the weeds of grief
Until the Lord return ?
Come, then, Lord Jesus, come !

The whole creation groans,
And waits to hear that voice,
That shall restore her comeliness,
And make her wastes rejoice.
Come, Lord, and wipe away
The curse, the sin, the stain,
And make this blighted world of ours
Thine own fair world again.
Come, then, Lord Jesus, come !

H. BONAR.

IV.

The Glorious Man.

He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you : whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.—Acts. iii., 20, 21.



HE, for whom we wait, is “the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill [fulfil] all things.”* Though mortal eye could not follow Him as He passed through the pathway of the firmament, yet faith has found Him and worshipped Him in His exalted state. These words of God are lenses adjusted to the gaze of faith, which make very present “the substance of things hoped for.”† Through them we look and “see the heavens opened, and the Son of

* Eph. iv., 10. † Heb. xi., 1.

man standing on the right hand of God.”* No exclusive vision is this. It is the common portion of all, who “be risen with Christ” to “seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”† His continued advocacy and intercession are of imperative necessity to the believer. They rank with the functions of His mediatorial office finished on earth. For all shortcomings, infirmities and sorrows they provide a safe and satisfying refuge. When St. Paul would give utterance to the warrants of his own freedom from condemnation, he combines the present occupation of Christ with the merit of His finished work. “It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”‡ These are the four reasons, each equally significant and saving, for the hope that is in him.

As the high priest of Israel entered within the veil, bearing the blood from the sacrifice and the incense from the altar, so did Jesus Christ ascend “into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”§ Aaron within was no

* Acts vii., 56. † Colos. iii., 1. ‡ Rom. viii., 34. § Heb. ix., 24.

different from Aaron without the veil. Jesus on high is unaltered from that He was below. Still does He wear the form of the servant. There is a man in the highest heaven. Though gloriously changed, since in the garden His body was embalmed and buried, yet does He retain the marks of His suffering. He is "the Lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne." The same heart beats in His glorified body. The same truly human sympathy times its throbs. The same eternal love is its unchanging law. The character He bore on earth is His character forever. Though glory now transfigures His person, though angels and arch-angels await His bidding, though all the redeemed from earth follow in His train whithersoever He goeth, while high heaven unceasingly echoes with His praise, yet has He respect unto the least and most laggard of those loved ones, whom He has still in the world. What a marvel is this! In that exalted state the Glorious Man, Jesus the Son of God and God the Son, is touched with a feeling of our infirmities in remembrance of His own times of earthly trial. His sympathy and strength are not restrained. And then every prayer we present,

whether in solitary communion or when surrounded by the saints, in times of despondency or seasons of joy, for our own many wants or those of others in need, the Glorious Man always hears. For this very purpose has He ascended into heaven now to appear in the presence of God for us. Can you not trust your advocate? He prayed for Saint Peter that his faith might not fail. Even so He prays for us—the same priest, the same prayer. While among men He was a King in disguise. “Art thou a king, then,” were words of taunt, but told a tremendous truth. Then His reign was spiritual. It came not by observation. The sceptre that He swayed was one of grace and not of sense. How many were brought into captivity to His crown! “All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth,” were among His valedictory words as He ascended to the throne above the skies. There sits the King of saints. From thence shall He return. Meanwhile our loyalty is cherished towards an absent Sovereign, who has left His viceroy in the church. The Holy Ghost is His Vicar, to whom all submission is rendered and from whom all precepts are received “for Christ’s sake.” The spirit of the

departing believer hastes by death to "be present with the Lord." Whilst the body, bruised and broken, must sleep beneath the sod, the soul is wafted to be with Christ in paradise. Wherever Christ is this day, there are all those, who have outrun us in the race and entered into rest. We know not where that station is, and we do not ask to know. It is sufficient that He has gone to the glory, of which He emptied Himself before He came to this world.

Wheresoever, in space or state, that abiding of Christ now is, thence shall that identical Glorious Man, who ascended, return to the earth upon which He once walked. "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body [our body of humiliation], that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."* He shall return from the heaven to which He has ascended, from the right hand of the majesty on high.

When He cometh again He will wear the same sorrow-marked humanity with which He disappeared.

* Phil. iii., 20, 21.

“They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn.”* Our Lord returned from the sepulchre with peculiar signs of His identity to demonstrate to His disciples that it was even He Himself, who had gained the victory over death; but more than this, as a preparation for the exaltation, which was to come. Why did He not lay aside the spear-mark and the wounds of the nails in His hands? He changed multitudes of facts in the grave. Why did He reserve these? To reassure His disciples in their earthly life? Certainly. But also to mark Him as the One who was crucified, and was risen, when His faithful disciples should welcome Him from the skies. The piercing shall be the proof that it is the very Christ. When He came from the grave it was with a body bearing the evidences of His sorrow and His triumph; but unlike the body of His death, for He came and went more as a phantom than a man, and yet He was a man, for He ate with them, talked with them, and entered into their experiences as one of themselves.

This glorified body is to be the standard, to which

* Zech. xii., 10.

all the bodies of believers are to be conformed in the day of Christ's coming. With this glorious assurance we lay in the grave those that we love and lose. It is the blessed hope, with which we look forward to the welcome of Christ on His personal return. "We shall be like Him." "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Howsoever scarred in struggle, bowed with burdens, furrowed with fears and infirmities, in that day the face and form of the believer shall receive a marvellous renovation and matchless beauty. The Passion of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Ghost, shall be beyond all controversy justified in the "glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."* The measure of the Master's love, and gift of Himself, shall have an unconceived interpretation when, as believers, we who "have been planted together in the likeness of His death, shall be, also, in the likeness of His resurrection."†

The identity of the Lord is clearly established by the description of His session now, from whence

* Eph. v., 27. † Rom. vi., 5.

He shall return; of the body in which He will appear; of the spear-mark, which certifies its sameness; of the office which He maintains in the skies; and of the personal relation in which He stands to the people, whom He has loved. The kingdom of Jesus on this earth demands the same presence that the redemption of Jesus required. What joyful tidings are these, to those who are looking for that blessed hope! How they swell the heart of him who loves the Lord Jesus Christ! The place at His feet for which Mary longed shall be ours! The same Christ in the same body, in the same triumph over death and life, we are to welcome!

What words of comfort are these to the suffering, the sorrowing, and the striving saint! Draw aside the curtains in the chamber of sickness; let this sunshine scatter its shades. In His own bottle doth the Master gather every submissive mourner's tears. With the promise of His personal coming does He paint the rainbow upon them, as in hours of desolation and despondency they stream from our eyes. The worker for Jesus girds himself for new endeavor and daring as in the Word he catches the footfall of the returning Lord. One sight of The Glorious

Man will compensate all the toils of the longest life. To hear Him say "Well done" will empty memory of all the complaints and curses of men. How much, rather, shall we rejoice when in a moment we shall be "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." Fellow-watcher "faint not;" though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."*

* 2 Cor. iv., 17, 18.

Now our heavenly Aaron enters,
With His blood within the veil;
Joshua now is come to Canaan,
And the kings before Him quail;
Now He plants the tribes of Israel
In their promised resting-place;
Now our great Elijah offers
Double portion of His grace.

Thou hast raised our human nature
On the clouds to God's right hand;
There to sit in heavenly places,
There with Him in glory stand;

Jesus reigns, adored by angels;
Man with God is on the throne;
Mighty Lord, in thine Ascension
We by faith, behold our own.

Lift us up from earth to heaven,
Give us wings of faith and love,
Gales of holy aspirations
Wafting us to realms above;
That, with hearts and minds uplifted,
We with Christ our Lord may dwell,
When He sits enthroned in glory
In the heavenly citadel.

So at last, when He appeareth,
We from out our graves may spring,
With our youth renewed like eagles,
Floating round our heavenly King.
Caught up on the clouds of Heaven,
And may meet Him in the air,
Rise to realms where He is reigning,
And may reign for evermore.

CHR. WORDSWORTH, D.D.

V.

The Glory Revealed in Us.

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.—Revelation xx., 6.



HE God-Man shall, at His coming for His saints, be the cause of marvellous changes. Glory shall be upon the graves of those “who sleep in Jesus,” and the bodies of living believers shall be fitted for ascension. These two facts in the future are unmistakeable coincidents of His coming.

It will not be denied by any student of God's Word that “the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God : and they that hear shall live.”* A literal

* John v., 25.

recall of the bodies buried beneath the earth or the waves is anticipated by all, who accept the scriptures as their rule of faith. As in the early experience of the twelve, so now may Christians be troubled at times by rationalistic doubts. Even the doctrine of the Cross and the Open Sepulchre of Jesus excited suspicions. The disciples "understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."* When faith surrendered to reason they were enveloped with the darkness of doubt. In Athens, when the philosophers, who listened to Paul, "heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, we will hear thee again of this matter;"† but "certain men clave unto him and believed." Men are similarly affected by the declaration of this truth in our day. We, who recognize in the scriptures a revelation of our Lord's purposes, decline to enter into a discussion about the probability or possibility of the resurrection of the dead. It is enough for us that He hath promised it, and in His own restoration from the grave has given us both the pledge and the pattern of our rising

* Luke xviii., 34. † Acts xvii., 32.

again. The Sadducean error of saying "that there is no resurrection,"* and the cognate effort to spiritualize this assurance so as to apply it to the renewal of souls and not of bodies, are in words denounced by the apostle. They, who so render the literal teaching of the Word of God, are disciples of "Hymenæus and Philetus; who, concerning the truth, have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some."†

This is one of the sublimest mysteries of the Gospel. Nature is full of its analogies. The successive stages of life suggest instructive illustrations of its character. The doctrine itself rests on the testimony of God alone. Without His word, though we possessed "all knowledge," yet would the wisest man be ignorant of the reserved privilege of the race. In the same manner, and by the same method, are we taught the work of Jesus Christ in perfecting eternal salvation for believers, and the fact of a future life for their bodies, summoned from the grave. Because God has said so, and for no other reason, do we believe "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."‡

* Matthew xxii., 23. † 2 Timothy ii., 17, 18. ‡ Acts xxiv., 15.

Upon the same Divine testimony must we rely for information about the character of this recall of the dead. So far as I have been able to discern, there are only two passages of the New Testament, which refer to the condition of the bodies of unbelievers, when released from the bands of the grave. The burden of scripture is the glorification of the saints. There is scarcely limit to the texts which contain instruction on this entrancing topic. The believer's body "is sown in corruption ; it is raised in incorruption : it is sown in dishonor ; it is raised in glory : it is sown in weakness ; it is raised in power : it is sown a natural body ; it is raised a spiritual body."* The kingdom of God is not a disembodied state. God will care for its habitation by those who have "borne the image of the earthy," but now by His all-healing touch are made to "bear the image of the heavenly." Thus His church shall be recovered from every defect. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery ; we shall not all sleep (die) but we shall all be changed."† Both the buried and the busy saints shall receive

* 1 Cor. xv., 42-4. † *Ibid*, 50, 51.

this bodily transformation. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."* The apostle confines the comfort of this promise to those who are "in Christ." It is all too manifest that no inclusion of unbelievers was intended. In an earlier chapter of the same epistle Paul teaches us, "God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power."† The character and connection of the resurrection is thus defined: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?"‡ The Head having been brought from the grave and enthroned in glory, it is inconceivable that the members should be left in corruption.

This personal relation of believers to Jesus is the reason and definition of their resurrection. Our bodies are sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Thus they become and are maintained as "the temple of God." In life and death they are equally covered by the cloud of His covenant care. "If any man defile (destroy) the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."§ Death is the enemy of God's

* 1 Cor. xv., 53. † 1 Cor. vi., 14. ‡ *Ibid*, 15. § 1 Cor. iii., 17.

temples, and is under this ban. He is as the king of Babylon, which cast down the temple at Jerusalem, made with hands. A like victory over his power and pride is promised. Solomon constructed, Nebuchadnezzar ruined, and Zerubbabel restored the shrine of God on Mount Zion. Even so the Holy Ghost renewed the soul and body of the believer to be the dwelling-place of God; death may dissolve it, but a greater than Solomon or Zerubbabel shall "in that day" re-erect it for "an habitation of God by the Spirit." "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts."*

Let no believer fear death. Besides the many assurances of succor which spring from the work of Jesus, as his substitute and Saviour, he has the consolation of a great argument. The premises are in his present experience. The irresistible conclusion voices itself in the glad challenge—"Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory." The sum of the statement is in the words, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the

* Haggai ii., 9.

dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”*

The resurrection of the bodies of believers will antedate by a thousand years or more the summons to “the rest of the dead.”† We, who belong to Christ, are to enjoy the rapture to the skies and the reign upon earth, whilst the bodies of those who have denied Him still remain mingled with their kindred dust. So surpassing are the privileges of this first resurrection of believers, that it is called in comparison with the return to judgment, of those who have been godless in life, “a better resurrection.”‡ It would seem that our Lord and His apostles had been particularly careful to guard our minds from confusion in this matter. Let us give their full weight to words, which were spoken with so much discrimination. “The dead in Christ shall rise first.”§ When? “Every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ’s at His coming.”|| The wave-offering of a risen Saviour’s body was carried into the temple, more than eighteen hundred years ago. The

* Romans viii., 2. † Revel. xx., 5. ‡ Hebrews xi., 35. § 1 Thess. iv., 16.

|| 1 Cor. xv., 23.

harvest, represented by this sheaf of the first fruits, is next to be reaped. "Then cometh the end."* Has this resurrection a distinctly-applied name? "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."† What shall be the condition of those who partake in this privilege? "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."‡ Is a desire to be numbered with this company permissible? Paul counted "all things but loss . . . that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of (from or from among) the dead."§ Have we any earnest of this event to guide us in our expectation? When Jesus died "the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city

* 1 Cor. xv., 24. † Luke xiv., 14. ‡ Luke xx., 35, 36. § Phil. iii., 8, 10, 11.

and appeared unto many.”* These were the first trophies of our Lord’s triumph and doubtless were transferred with Him to the Paradise of God. Have we any words of promise, which warrant our personal faith and hope of this glorious fact? No less than four times in a single and short discourse did our Lord repeat an assurance, which the weakest in the faith may appreciate: “This is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. No man can come to Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”† The words of Jesus embody “the Father’s will.” The acceptance and enjoyment of this unparalleled promise is a matter of obedience and loyalty to God. No child of God can safely distrust the language or suffer any one,

* Matt. xxvii., 52, 53. † John vi., 39, 40, 44, 54.

who misuses the Master's teaching, to disturb the complacent repose of His life. "The last day" is the expression everywhere used by our Lord to assure His "glorious appearing." The time of the resurrection of the believers is thus defined beyond all dispute and cavil.

When that day shall dawn redemption will be perfected. We are ransomed now, but our deliverance is yet incomplete. Even those who are in Paradise have not received the full fruition of their hopes. Their spirits have indeed entered into refreshment and joy, but their bodies still sleep. They wait in rest, and we watch while at work, for the same event. "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."* Towards the coming of Christ for His saints all the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs and untitled souls, comprising the "great multitude" now with Christ, are looking with heavenly longing. The saints on earth find their communion with those "to glory gone" in this blessed hope. There is no division of

* Hebrews xi., 39, 40.

interest in all the host of God's elect. Both living saints and dead part alike. Neither can have the advantage over the other. Their common coronation shall come when they shall "see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." * All inanimate and irrational creatures share in the unrest of those still bound by the limitations of a fallen nature. In that day "the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit—the redemption of our body." Then shall our forms possess the power of a sinless and glorified manhood. "They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint." † Then shall the intellect be as quick as intuition, faith shall surrender to

* Luke xxi., 27, 28. † Is. xl., 31.

sight, hope shall be lost in fruition, and love shall be purified of all imperfection. So prepared by resurrection, at the coming of the Lord, shall believers be presented by Christ "to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."* These shall come with Christ to recognize and partake in the residence and reign of the Lord upon the earth. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."†

Chrysostom in one of his sermons uses as an illustration of the truth, upon which we have been meditating, a description of an old house with shattered roof and broken windows and unstable pinning. "The landlord comes to the tenant and bids him move. I am going to take this old house down; I mean to build another in its stead upon the same foundation. You shall see in it the likeness and identity of the old. I wish you to move to my house, for you will not like to see this home of so many years dismantled and dissolved. You shall return again to abide in the restored house

* Eph. v., 27. † Colos. iii., 4.

as your unquestioned home forever." He therefore removes the tenant to his own abode, whilst in the place of that broken and shattered tenement he builds a house, whose walls are marble, whose gates are agate, whose windows are clear as crystal, while diamonds and all precious gems stud its pavement as elements of ornament. So graciously, does he declare, the Lord God takes down the house of this body that He may restore it for the future indwelling of the one who awaits His coming. Our present love of our bodies is a prophecy of their immortality when clothed upon with glory. Death is dreaded because it divests men of that which they have so carefully cherished. The believer knows full well that it is but for a short time, that he shall be "absent from the body." Valiantly he cries in the face of death, "Rejoice not against me, O, mine enemy : when I fall, I shall arise ; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me."*

* Micah vii., 8.

I call the world's Redeemer mine ;
He lives, who died for me, I know ;
Who bought my soul with blood divine,
Jesus shall reappear below ;
Stand, in that dreadful day unknown,
And fix on earth His heavenly throne.

In this identic body, I,
With eyes of flesh refined, restored,
Shall see that self-same Saviour nigh,
See for myself my smiling Lord,
See with ineffable delight;
Nor faint to bear the glorious sight.

Then let the worms demand their prey,
The greedy grave my reins consume;
With joy I drop my mouldering clay,
And rest till my Redeemer come.
On Christ my life, in death rely,
Secure that I can never die.

CHAS. WESLEY.

VI.

The Glorious Rapture.

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death ; and was not found, because God had translated him.—Hebrews xi., 5.

And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder ; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.—2 Kings ii., 11.

Her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne.—Rev. xii., 5.



HERE have been exceptions to the law of death. Itself, the apparently inevitable experience of our race, the thronged highway to the unchanging world, the inexorable enemy of fallen nature, still death has twice been evaded, once overcome, and shall be triumphed over by a great multitude at the coming of Him, who “hath the keys of death and Hades.” Enoch and Elijah entered heaven through the air, and not by the way of the grave.

Jesus, the Divine Man, after He had bowed His head and given up His spirit to this sovereign and tyrant, broke the seal upon the sepulchre and through the pathway of stars ascended to His throne. And we, too, "which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." These parallel facts are established by the same testimony. Either all or none are to be believed. They must stand or fall together.

The time has passed for the appeal of the apostle before Agrippa: "Why should it be thought incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" The universal church receives and rejoices in the assurance. But is it contained in plainer scriptures than those, which teach the rapture of glory to be ministered to living believers, when the Lord comes for His saints? The impossibility of such translation is answered by history. Its improbability is met by repeated promises. Indeed, after the Lord's ascension, had nothing more been said it would have been the instinctive expectation of His disciples to part from earth by the same path. It must have puzzled them, indeed, that He "had abolished death

and brought life and immortality to light," and yet that they must die. How curiously, and with how many doubting thoughts must they have looked upon the pale face of the first believer who, after the disappearance of Jesus, "fell on sleep." Had not the Master said, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."* And yet death had despoiled their hope!

In the interval between His resurrection and ascension they knew of but one gate to the unseen world. They must all die. Strangely enough sounded the words spoken by the Master about John, "If I will that he tarry till I come."† They were like another Jacob's ladder from earth to heaven. The brethren questioned among themselves what this saying meant, until by frequent repetition the rumor gained currency that John "should never die." The evangelist is careful, when relating the conversation, to add, "Yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Whilst the Lord remained with them there could have been no conflict between the expectation of death and the

* John xi., 26. † John xxi., 22.

anticipation of His reappearance. "All the fathers fell on sleep," and the children would fare no better. The promise of His coming again was held in abeyance by the comfort of His risen presence.

But so soon as He was parted from them on Olivet, and ascended through the air, this hope naturally assumed its primal place. Death no longer was to be the rule, but the exception. Each day they awoke with the thought, 'will He come for us before night?' and they rested during the hours of darkness in the sweet hope that "at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning,"* they might be awakened for their heavenward flight. This was the attitude of mind maintained by the early church. They thought little about death, but "looked for and hastened unto the coming of the Lord."

The apostles, in all the epistles, occupied much space with instructions, which harmonize this apparent contradiction between the words of the Lord and the facts of life. They gave renewed emphasis to "the heavenly hope" of a deathless translation, but, at the same time, they showed the related office of death. Among the possessions of believers are

* Mark xiii., 35.

numbered: "life or death."* They were counseled to maintain a sturdy indifference, and, after the example of Paul, to profess: "in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."† The glory of Jesus was recognized in that He "hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."‡ The present influence of His finished work was identified: "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."§ The glorious period was clearly predicted, when "shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."|| Then will the anthem roll over the empty graves and through the thronged sky: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."¶ The student of scripture will be surprised

* 1 Cor. iii., 22. † Phil. i., 20, 21. ‡ 2 Tim. i., 10. § Heb. ii., 14, 15. || 1 Cor. xv., 54. ¶ *Ibid.*, 55-57.

on testing the statement, to discover how few, comparatively, are the references in the epistles to physical death, and how universally by the apostles it is represented in a secondary and temporary character. A careful examination of the passages arranged in the concordance under the word "Death," will convince a candid mind that the Spirit of God gives far less prominence to this gloomy fact, than do modern preachers and teachers, and absolutely no place to it as a Christian motive. Thus taught, believers, buoyed by a certain confidence that they should share the final rapture with all saints, uncomplainingly suffered death's defeat. To the last how would they hope to be spared the humiliation. Like their Master would they cry to the Father with anxiety, and yet with submission: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me! nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."* With Paul, in the dissolution of the body by pain, would they groan: "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."† And yet, when disap-

* Matt. xxvi., 39, 42. † 2 Cor. v., 4.

pointed in their desire, death was disarmed of all its darkness and terrors. They "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God."* His attitude prepared Him for and assured His promised descent. Their last prayer to this coming Christ was often, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and when they had said this they fell asleep.

The apostle Peter knew, before the ascension of Jesus, that he was to die. The Lord had said by the side of the Sea of Galilee. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedest whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shalt gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God." This prediction was present with him when writing his epistles. It gives a special character to all his references to the Lord's appearing. The coming of the Master for His disciples and friends, is scarcely alluded to. He speaks of that "end of all things," and "the day of the

* Acts vii., 55.

Lord," which are identified throughout scripture as the return of the King and Judge, surrounded by His glorified people. In this he would share with them. "The everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," was to be their common inheritance, but they might enter into it by different gates. His own mode of departure was determined. In reference to theirs he says not a word. By whichever path they might come, his consuming care was that to the Christians for whom he wrote: "An entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly." To accomplish this end he declared: "I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus hath showed me. Moreover, I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance." * From his own history and his words it is evident that Peter was an exception to the rule of hope in the apostolic church. He was the complete contrast of Simeon, to whom "it was revealed by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the

* 2 Peter i., 12-15.

Lord's Christ." Peter found "the way of the cross the way of light." The one received Christ in the early, as will many in a future generation; the other went to Christ through the grave, as have the multitudes of believers in past generations.

When he opens the epistles of Paul, the student of scripture is arrested by the change in style and expression, so soon as the appearing of Christ for His people becomes the topic of the apostle's teaching. The writer no longer employs the second or third person of the pronoun. He classes himself with those who wait for the Saviour. His hope clings to the promise, and longs for its fulfilment. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."* This is a most

* 1 Thess. iv., 15-17.

impressive passage of the Word of God. Not only does it demonstrate the apostle's own expectation, which we now know to have been disappointed, but it presents in compact compass the circumstances, which are to combine in the glory of the Lord's coming. The dead are to have the preference, if such there can be in the event of a "moment." Then the living believers are by the transforming nearness of Jesus, to "be changed."* Lost shall be all the limitations of this flesh. Time and space are nought to the spiritual body. "This corruptible shall have put on incorruption. This mortal shall have put on immortality."† Fashioned by secret and mysterious forces, will these forms of ours have become "like unto His glorious body." Thus released from the laws of this lower life, shall the saints ascend "in clouds" to meet the Lord. They shall form the clouds. There is no definite particle in the Greek. All the shadows that shall fall that day on the earth will be the darkness cast by the disappearance of those who have been "lights in the world."

With what hallelujahs will they salute the King!

* 1 Cor. xv., 51. † *Ibid*, 54.

What festal joy will be theirs ! Now they ascend through realms of space to that heavenly city. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in !" This is their triumphant cry. With what acclaim shall unfallen angels welcome their coming. The cherubim and seraphim shall respond in praise. The harpers on their well-tuned, heavenly harps, shall repeat the melody. What a chorus of singers from heaven and from earth shall celebrate the triumph of that day ! Imagination fails to attain the far-off echoes of the song. The heart is heavy with the "home-sickness" of heaven. Hope still pleads the promise, "I come quickly." When shall we appear before our God ? Above all other things, do the saints desire thus "to enter into the joy of your Lord."

I love yon pale blue sky ; it is the floor
Of that glad home where I shall shortly be ;
A home from which I shall go out no more ;
From toil and grief and vanity set free.

I gaze upon yon everlasting arch,
Up which the bright stars wander, as they shine ;
And as I mark them in their nightly march,
I think how soon that journey shall be mine !

Yon silver drift of silent cloud, far up
In the still heaven--through you my pathway lies;
Yon rugged mountain-peak--how soon your top
Shall I behold beneath me, as I rise!

Not many more of life's slow-pacing hours,
Shaded with sorrow's melancholy hue;—
Oh, what a glad ascending shall be ours,
Oh, what a pathway up yon starry blue!

A journey like Elijah's, swift and bright,
Caught gently upward to an early crown,
In heaven's own chariot of unblazing light,
With death untasted and the grave unknown.

H. BONAR.

VII.

A Glimpse of the Glory.

We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount.— 2 Peter i., 16-18.



THE Transfiguration of Jesus was a prophecy in act. It is incomprehensible and without comfort, to those who do not study it with the language of St. Peter as its commentary. The very general neglect of this most unusual and unique incident in our Lord's earthly life is a sign of the indifference, with which His "glorious appearing" is regarded. Let us look carefully into its connection and circumstances, that we may more

intelligently "wait" for the Lord. "The more earnest heed" we give to this fact, which is without parallel in His days as "the man of sorrows," the more clearly shall we see the "blessed hope" to be justified by the words of the Master Himself.

The record of this occurrence is made by three of the four evangelists. Their agreement in the recital of its details is exact. There are no discrepancies nor inconsistencies which need to be harmonized. Moreover it is introduced by each of them in connection with the same prediction. This is suggestive and significant. The Master was speaking to His disciples in warning against the imprudence of exchanging their souls for the world. He enforces His appeal with the promise: "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels, and then He shall reward every man according to his works. Verily, I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John, his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them."*

* Matt. xvi., 27, 28; xvii., 1, 2.

The pertinency of the prophecy as a motive to unworldliness, we shall consider in another place. Just now we fasten our attention upon its history. This prediction was altogether new truth to the twelve. They were not as yet accustomed to its after and often repetitions. On His first unveiling of the future, the Lord adopted the double method of the Old Testament. He employed both voice and vision. By their consenting testimony He impressed, upon the minds of His disciples, the conviction that He was other than He seemed, and all that He claimed to be. As in the education of early faith, types and sacrifices were related to literal promise and prophecy, as now the example of Jesus is an illustration and enforcement of His precepts, so in this revelation of Himself and His purposes did our Lord first speak plainly; and then, "after six days," repeat His teaching in action. He gave them a glimpse of the glory that was to follow.

The charge, with which He sealed their lips after they had beheld His glory, is full of meaning in its connection. "As they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen again from the

dead.”* Such discoveries of Himself were not for the world, nor yet for Judas. Misapprehensions and misconstructions would certainly attend the circulation of the report. Besides, as the substitute for sinners, He must assume the rejection that belonged to them, and not the reverence which was rightfully His own. After He has proved Himself, by taking again His life, a trophy from the power of the grave, to be a sufficient ransom and Redeemer, there was no further need of restraint. Then were His foes helpless to seize Him or subvert His mission. His great work had been well done. The three witnesses of His glory might safely, and to edification, tell all they had seen. Their testimony would explain His oft-repeated promise of return, and enhance the joy of His companionship in His risen life.

That the disciples understood Him to assert, by this concurrent teaching, His coming “to restore the kingdom to Israel,” and to fulfil the Old Testament prophecies of a Glorious King, is evidenced by the question, which they asked as soon as they were forbidden to make known the vision. We can

* Matt. xvii., 9.

well imagine the current of their thoughts. Had not Malachi written : " Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me : and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in : behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming ? and who shall stand when he appeareth ? for he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver."* This must be none other than He who is to come. But where is the " messenger ? " They bring their trouble to the Master, saying : " Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come."† This question has no conceivable meaning, unless the Transfiguration had been interpreted by them as an earnest and foregleam of the " glorious appearing." That their thoughts were much confused was most natural. What could they comprehend about the " come in the glory of His Father, with His angels," when immediately He re-assumed His marred features and weary form. To difficulties of faith, such as this, the Master adapted and addressed

* Malachi iii., 1-3. † Matt. xvii., 10.

His answer : " I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them."* This reply, which is given with greater fulness by Saint Mark in the parallel passage, instructed them in the order of His revelations. He traced for them the successive events in His manifestation. First came John the Baptist, in the spirit and power of Elias. Then appeared the Son of Man to "suffer," "be set at nought," and "be risen from the dead." Afterwards the Son of man "shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels."† In this statement He sketched the outline of all His relations to believers, from the presence of His herald until He should be recognized on His earthly throne.

St. Peter clearly refers to this incident and interview in the passage, with which we have introduced our present meditation. He claims the consent of both St. James and St. John in the application of the vision to "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." They were associated as "eye-witnesses of His majesty." They together heard the

* Matt. xvii., 12. † Luke ix., 26.

“voice to Him from the excellent glory.” In the absence of denial, we have a right to infer an unanimity of testimony from those, who “were with Him in the holy mount.” Because of this prefiguring purpose, the mount became to them, as did Horeb to Moses, “holy ground.” No other association with place is so designated throughout the New Testament. Not Bethlehem, nor Bethany, neither Gethsemane nor Golgotha attained such a title of sanctity. And for the manifest reason that these and all other scenes were connected with His humiliation as the mediator for man. The ground of the garden, which drank in the drops of gore that fell from the agonized face of the Man of Sorrows; the place of the skull, upon which flowed the blood and water from the pierced side of the Sufferer, who “saved others but Himself could not save;” these may be revered by superstition, but they are not sanctified in the words of the Spirit. That unnamed and unknown mountain has this solitary recognition. Thereon stood the feet of Him who, in the guise of His imperial presence, for a brief period was transfigured before them. The parenthesis, of His subjection to the curse and triumph over the

law as man's substitute, of His ascension to the heavens as the saints' fore-runner and intercessor, was passed over, and the majesty which is to follow was manifested. Well might those who were with Him, when recalling the surpassing grandeur of their experience, say: "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father."*

An examination of the details of this vision will establish still further this interpretation of its purpose. We now know far more of its meaning than could the disciples have, at the time, conceived. Jesus has now "received from God the Father honor and glory," and has "passed into the heavens." The contradiction between His human and transformed appearance does not perplex us. We look back upon the scene, with His exaltation in mind, as a talisman to explain the symbol. The Glorious Man is none other than He who was the peasant of Galilee and the reputed malefactor of Calvary. When He comes again this will be the confessed connection of His triumph with His trial. The brightness, which shall halo His head, will glorify the marks of the crown of thorns. The Lion of the

* John i., 14.

tribe of Judah is "the Lamb as it had been slain." Thus taught by the Spirit, we rejoice in the recognition of the identity of the Nazarene and Him "who was transfigured before them." Would you see the Lord as He will be when He cometh for His saints, then dismiss from thought all other descriptions of Him, contained in the gospels, and concentrate the powers of your mind and imagination upon the comprehension and realization of this graphic word-picture: "His face did shine as the sun and His raiment was white as the light,"* "so as no fuller on earth can white them;"† even "as He prayed the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening."‡ What shall be the beauty of the accepting smile of the Master when thus His features are the mirror of the inaccessible glory? With what power of constraint and with what precious commendation shall those lips, on which "grace was poured," then speak the words that now it is not possible for man to hear or bear? O gentle eyes of glory! O gracious lips of the King! How do Thy loved ones wait to receive the glance of their Beloved and to hear His voice! With

* Matt. xvii., 2. † Mark ix., 3. ‡ Luke ix., 29.

pride and praise shall the Bride claim this Man from the Glory, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." *

As upon "the holy mount" "there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him," † so shall the saints of all dispensations be in communion when He cometh again. From the busy activity or midnight sleep of the city had the three disciples been taken up into the high mountain to be with Jesus. The multitude still dwelt below in unconscious indifference to the vision above them. It neither disturbed nor improved them. "Even so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man." The few that retain faith shall be summoned by that Master, in whom they have confided. Not all the professed disciples shall be caught up to meet the Lord. The "shout" ‡ will not be heard by the world. The apostle is careful to use a Greek word, which limits the audience. It is the cry of a commander to his soldiers, or of a captain to his sailors. To those who submit themselves, and to none other, shall the "voice of the archangel" come. Moses will be with them, and all the "dead in

* Songs of Sol. v., 16. † Matt. xvii., 3. ‡ 1 Thess. iv., 16.

Christ" restored from the grave. Elias, too, the pattern and pledge of the deathless saints, has his place in the fellowship. All generations, all dispensations, all experiences shall "enter into the joy of the Lord" with equal acceptance, if agreed in submission to the Lord Christ. What is lacking fully to illustrate and impress the predicted circumstances of the coming of Christ for His people? Does not the vision marvellously make palpable the promise?

The occupation "in glory" is intimated with not less pointedness. "There talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias; who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem."* The attainment of their final glorification was still contingent. The death of Jesus would secure the substance of their hope. With what power must the Master have developed His purpose to these saints of the ages. Until the cloud hid them from the disciples' communion this was the burden of their conversation. May we not believe that this is still the wonder of heaven? The "spirits of just men" rejoice in that

* Luke ix., 30, 31.

finished salvation, which has wrought their rest. Every song in the book of Revelation has this transcendent refrain. And when Jesus comes this shall be our all-engaging talk. What multitudes of questions shall we refer to the Master ! What light will shine from His presence to satisfy our curious doubts ! What depths of wisdom and knowledge shall be revealed, when the better Joseph makes Himself known to His brethren. But the key of all shall be "His decease." The Divine Tragedy shall be then seen to be the Divinest Philosophy. The precious blood ! What shall compare with this as a topic of speech or of song, an incentive to worship or to work, an inspiration of love or of holy life in the presence of the King. Let us on earth anticipate the carol of the saints, and with melody in our hearts together praise "Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father ; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever, Amen."*

* Revelation i., 5, 6.

I journey through a desert drear and wild,
Yet is my heart by such sweet thoughts beguiled
Of Him on whom I lean, my strength and stay,
I can forget the sorrows of the way.

Thoughts of His glory—on the cross I gaze,
And there behold its sad, yet healing rays;
Beacon of hope, which, lifted up on high,
Illumes with heavenly light the tear-dimm'd eye.

Thoughts of His coming—for that joyful day
In patient hope I watch, and wait, and pray;
The dawn draws nigh, the midnight shadows flee,
Ah, what a sunrise will that advent be!

Thus while I journey on, my Lord to meet,
My thoughts and meditations are so sweet
Of Him on whom I lean, my strength, my stay,
I can forget the sorrows of the way.

H. BONAR.

VIII.

Before the Man in the Glory.

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.
—1 Corinthians iv., 5.



AFTER the resurrection, and the rapture, the saints shall “ever be with the Lord.”* All the tribulations, which shall distress the nations, subsequent to the time of their departure, will be unknown to them. They will be as far removed from the experience of sorrowful things, as are the angels of God in this dispensation, or the glorified body of Jesus since the ascension. When they shall return with the Master, it will be to share

* 1 Thess. iv., 17.

His reign. In the kingdom of Christ re-established among men they are to be assessors of His government. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne,"* were words spoken from the glory. To this condition of rest, rule and rejoicing are they transferred at the coming of Christ for His saints. That day He shall fulfil His own prayer: "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me."† The purposes of permitted temptation and trials will have been accomplished. The refiner shall withdraw the crucible from the fire, for in the purified silver will He perceive the reflection of His own image. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."‡

Thither ascending in heart and mind we are to meditate, so far as the Word of God will warrant, upon the experiences of the saints with the Man in the

* Revel. iii., 21. † John xvii., 24. ‡ Revel. xxi., 4.

Glory. It would be easy to give flight to imagination and anticipate somewhat of the ecstatic bliss, which shall certainly be ours, "who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."* But it will be more profitable to our meetness for "the inheritance of the saints in light,"† if we limit our thoughts to the language of the Spirit. Not fancy, but truth is sanctifying. The facts are to be glorious enough without suborning in their aid a system of allegory. No shadowy portion is that which is promised to those, who "shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy."‡ No need is there of subtle invention to torture from the Bible a spiritualized meaning. In plain phrase and connected recital has the Spirit of God shown us in the scriptures "the things that shall be hereafter."

Justification is judgment in one's favor. To him, who receiveth this grace, there can never come the shadow of condemnation. He is acquitted before the law and the government of God. Thenceforth he is not "under the law, but under grace." And glory is only grace developed. The one is the flower

* 1 Peter i., 5. † Colos. i., 12. ‡ Revel. iii., 4.

in bud. The other is the blossom in perfection. The one is the grey dawn. The other is the glorious day. The life that is passed "under grace" cannot fail of glory. "Therefore," wrote St. Paul, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."* In the matter of sin the saint can never again be arraigned. His all-prevailing substitute Saviour has undertaken that for him. By His own offering of Himself, and His continual intercession in our behalf, our Master will care for the salvation and security of him, who confides in His all-sufficient merits. With boldness may such a justified soul say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."† That one act of faith, claiming the righteousness and blood of Jesus as an honorable answer to the precepts and penalties of an infracted law, will be ratified by the resurrection and rapture. This, and only this salvation by grace, is the reason of the believer's glorification.

* Rom. v., 1, 2. † 2 Tim. i., 12.

Sin having been adjudged on the Cross, it remains that the saint's services should be scrutinized before "he shall receive a reward."* For this, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."† The saints in Corinth were thus warned that the actions of present life had inevitable influences upon the measure and station of their eternal condition. In almost identical words St. Paul wrote to the Roman Christians: "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.... every one of us shall give account of himself to God."‡ The remembrance of this assize might well restrain the Christians of those days and our time from mutual judgment and contempt. This will be found to be the teaching of the context. The purpose of the revelation of Christ to His people is declared by the Lord Himself: "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give to every man according as his work shall be."§ The measure of our glory is determined before we die, or are "caught up." "Every man shall receive his own

* 1 Cor. iii., 14. † 2 Cor. v., 10. ‡ Rom. xiv., 10, 12. § Revel. xx., 12.

reward, according to his own labor.”* The differences in duties are not graded. “He that planteth and he that watereth are one.”† The reward will be assigned according to the motive and spirit of the service.

When the saint's character and consecration are examined, though “every man shall have praise of God,” yet must every man “suffer loss.”‡ Who dare claim that throughout life he has built on the foundation “that is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” nothing but “gold, silver, precious stones?”§ Have no “wood, hay, stubble,” worthless and vain things, been worked into your character? We shall then know the importance of wasted time. At what a ruinous price of earthly pleasures will we find that we have exchanged our ranks in glory. “Every man's work shall be made manifest.” The day of secret thoughts and covered selfishness, disloyal to grace, will have passed. “The day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall

* 1 Cor. iii., 8. † *Ibid.*, 8. ‡ *Ibid.*, 15. § *Ibid.*, 11, 12.

be burnt, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." "The brightness of His coming,"* which shall afterwards consume the wicked, will in that day clear the saints of all taint of imperfection. They shall "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."† And now their results of life shall be sifted. That which is true and pure and good shall be accepted, whilst that which has been imperfect through selfishness and sin must be denied.

What marvelous reversals of earthly judgments will the Master make? The pomp and pride of profession will pass for nothing when searched by "the eyes that were as a flame of fire."‡ The meek and lowly, who have learned of Him, will no longer be despised. Not the least of the saints' services shall be forgotten. "Whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord."§ "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."|| "Of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the

* 2 Thess. ii., 8. † Revel. vii., 14. ‡ *Ib.*, i., 14. § Eph. vi., 8. || Matt. x., 42.

Lord Christ.”* With these passages before him it will not be difficult for every believer to learn a lesson of solemn responsibility. The trifling and frivolity of earth clearly detract from the capacity and condition of glory. The Christian has only time to “lay up treasures in heaven.”† To this he must dedicate every power of mind and soul and body. For this all days and institutions and associations are sanctified. In comparison with this, true prudence will permit no less worthy choice. “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”‡

* Colos. iii., 24. † Matt. vi., 20. ‡ Titus iii., 8.

Up, then, and linger not, thou saint of God,
Fling from thy shoulders each impeding load;
Be brave and wise, shake off earth's soil and sin,
That with the Bridegroom thou mayest enter in.
Oh, watch and pray!

Soon shall the voice be heard, “Behold, I come,”
That calls thee upward to thy glorious home,
That bids thee leave these vales and take swift wing,
To meet the hosts of thy descending King;—
And thou must rise!

'Tis a thick throng of foes, afar and near ;
All hell in front, a hating world in rear ;
 Yet flee thou canst not, victory must be won,
 Ere fall the shadows of Time's setting sun ;—
 And thou must fight !

Gird on thy armor ; face each weaponed foe ;
Deal, with the sword of heaven, the deadly blow ;
 Forward, still forward in the fight divine,
 Slack not the weapon till the field be thine.
 Win thou the crown.

H BONAR.

IX.

The Four Crowns.

In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of His people.—Isaiah xxviii., 5.

Behold, I come quickly ; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.—Rev. iii., 11.



HE saints win, but do not wear their crowns in this world. They are the heirs of an everlasting kingdom, but are “under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.”* The spirit of the sonship in their hearts is the earnest of their future freedom and assured station. They have been indeed delivered from the Law with its complaints and curses. But their majority has not yet been attained. And until they come to full age in grace they must submit to “chastisement whereof all are partakers.”†

* Gal. iv., 2. † Heb. xii., 8.

This paradox of their experience is repeatedly enforced and explained in God's Word. Assured of salvation they are still sifted by Satan. Blessed "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,"* they are to "fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."† They challenge "tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or sword," with the confident cry, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"‡ whilst they "are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."§ They stand in a double relation, which solves the contradiction. Like the mountains, their heads may be lifted up in the sunshine, while clouds and darkness with the voices of thunder and the fire of lightning may enshroud their lower life. It is enough for them that all is bright towards God. They are compensated and content in their controversy with the world lying in the wicked one, for daily are their

* Eph. i., 3. † Heb. iv., 1. ‡ Rom. viii., 35. § 1 Peter i., 6, 7.

capacity for glory and their confidence in their God developed. They live two lives. Angels minister to them. Jesus ever is with them. The Heavenly Father careth for them. Their windows towards Jerusalem are flooded with light. What avails it that "the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour?"* Will not "the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you?"† Through trial and toil of every sort they strive with peace undisturbed and the presence of their Lord as their inspiration. "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."‡ They rest upon the letter and live in the spirit of the promise. In the midst of labor they "find rest unto their souls."§ Indeed the believer regards all adverse things in his life as part of his legacy. They are the substance of his inheritance until the Lord comes. Half of all that he is to have is already his, and he patiently waits for that which is reserved. The Master said: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."|| He

*1 Peter v., 8. †*Ibid*, 10. ‡Heb. xiii., 5. §Matt. xi., 29. ||John xvi., 33.

watches all events in his own life and the world for the signs of His appearing to assert His control. Well does he know that the victory has already been attained; but when will "He come whose right it is"* to reign and rule?

It was observed in the triumphal procession of one of the Roman emperors, that the laurel wreath of a certain warrior was carried by him on his arm. All other heads were encircled with this badge of victory. Who was this soldier of many battles, and why did he decline to conform to the custom of the time and throng? To both questions he gave a single answer: "I am a Christian, and it does not become a Christian to wear his crown in this world." Right well had he received the spirit of his Master. He awaited the close of the last battle with sin and sorrow and death. That he should be a conqueror, and more than conqueror, through Him that had loved him, did not admit of doubt. But the coronation day could not come until all possible conflict was passed. Every believer shall then receive the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.† There is no contingency in his acceptance, if he has

* Ezek. xxi., 27. † Phil. iii., 14.

“put on Christ” and is “strong in the Lord.” Having overcome all he shall certainly “stand.”* His representative entrance into the places not made with hands, was secured by the ascension of his Lord. Even now, whilst battling with sin, his name is written in heaven. His citizenship is there. The title to “sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” has no lien to be discharged, nor cloud upon its completeness to be dissipated. He only awaits the day when he may wear that, which has been won for him, and through him by the life of his Lord.

The picture in the Interpreter’s House, to which John Bunyan’s dream conducts Christian, is a full illustration of the true relation of a believer’s reward to his present service. It was the portrait of a very grave person, whose eyes were lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth was written upon his lips, the world was behind his back; he stood as if he pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over his head. His instructor explained to the pilgrim the meaning of the several parts of the portrait, and in these words emphasized the significance of those features, which

* Eph. vi., 13.

are in our present line of thought : " Whereas thou seest the world as cast behind him, and that a crown hangs over his head, that is to show thee, that slighting and despising the things that are present for the love that he hath to his Master's service, he is sure in the world that comes next, to have glory for his reward." His own it is already, if life be true, but the crown of the believer may not yet be claimed. Look up ! A crown hangs over thy head, held by the Saviour's hand.

Before the judgment seat of Christ the crowns are to be assigned and assumed. When with Christ in the Glory, this will be the first privilege of the saints. To divest the promise of all material conceptions is most difficult, if not impossible. The Word of God so constantly uses the same expression to convey the assurance of our recognition and reward, that there must be somewhat of abiding substance and external beauty added to the condition of the saints in that day. It is not enough to interpret the word "crown" as the synonym of exaltation and triumph. All that it teaches, but infinitely more. The Master, in parable, associates it with becoming "ruler over many

things,”* “ruler over his household,”† “ruler over all his goods.”‡ The apostle introduces the additional authority of judgment: “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?”§ Even more than this is implied in the expression: “if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.”|| St. John gathers all these forms of definition into one: “And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on [over] the earth.”¶ Is it not the mind of the Spirit, in these and parallel passages, that glorified believers are to receive according to their capacity, and as a compensation for fidelity and diligence on earth, varying ranks of superior influence and control in the coming kingdom of Christ? Of these stations, the crowns are the symbols to us now, as they will be the badges of our participation in royalty when the Divine decision upon our present submission and service shall be rendered. While we should be careful not to intrude into the unrevealed purposes of God, we cannot, with good conscience, treat indifferently the promises He has plainly made. The scrip-

* Matt. xxv., 23. † *Ibid.*, xxiv., 45. ‡ *Ibid.*, 47. § 1 Cor. vi., 2, 3. || 2 Tim. ii., 12. ¶ Revel. v., 10.

tures are far from silent about the crowns of the saints. A consideration of several passages will suffice to establish, or to disprove the principles already in this meditation affirmed.

It is most natural to turn to the Epistle of Works, when searching for the truth on this topic. St. James in words, which have caused his inspiration to be suspected by many over-zealous defenders of the office of faith, insists upon the necessity that the believer should justify his relation to God by an accordant and consistent life among men. Without this, he pronounces faith to be fraudulent. But in such a sincere effort after godliness, he foresees the divers trials to which the believer will be subjected. He meets these foreboding anticipations with a choice benediction: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."* This crown is to be the compensation for the sufferings of this present time. Though now "in deaths oft," the Christian is encouraged to endure all hardness, with the assurance of a suitable and satisfying reward when the

* James i., 12.

Lord shall come. To the same effect are the words of our ascended Master, in His epistle to the church in Smyrna. They were exhorted to "fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."* These parallel passages identify the class of persons, who may hope for the reward, to which they refer, and present the same promise to stimulate Christian endurance and forbearance. Whatsoever may be the present lot of those whom Satan torments; though like Job they may be bereft of possessions, children and health, there is a vista into the glory-land through the clouds that overshadow them. Relying upon the sure word of their Master, they part cheerfully with all things that His providence claims, for they are confident of an enduring substance in the heavens. The sympathy and succor of an interceding Saviour are great consolations in the loss of all things for Christ's sake, but they are not worthy to be compared with the glory of the crown of life, which shall recompense

* Revel. ii., 10.

the saint. Let the believer, whose "soul is among lions," keep clearly before his faith and hope this royal assurance. Thus sustained, shall he certainly endure unto the end and be saved from all his sorrows. And since love is the constraint of patience, not only the action but its motive is recognized in the reward. This is the distinction: "Which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." Not the mere sentiment, or emotion, which passes among men by the name of "love," but the uncomplaining and untiring submission, to which true love for Christ ever prompts, is to receive honor and glory in that day. Love delights in Jesus; let it become powerful to restrain all rebellious thoughts and selfish discontent, whilst suffering under His hand. Only such love can wear "the crown of life."

Life is not all endurance. The active side of our present duty is implied in very many of the figures, and expressed in the precepts, which form the body of all the epistles. The apostle Paul often urged the analogy between the soldier, the wrestler, or the runner, and the consecrated Christian. In connection with one of his exhortations, having this positive view of our conduct as its underlying principle,

he wrote to the Corinthians : " Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize ? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown ; but we an incorruptible."* It must be manifest to the careful reader of this passage that a different reward is pictured by these words, than that already presented as the recompense of the suffering saint. The Imperishable Crown is not the Crown of Life. Its recipients, title, and the reason of its bestowal are sharply contrasted with that, of which we have already written. Obedience, earnestness, diligence and zeal would appear to be the characteristics of those, who are to be thus distinguished. They have distanced competitors. They have overcome those, who have disputed their standing before God. Not flesh and blood, but principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this dispensation and spiritual wickedness in high places have contested their prowess and power. There is nothing lacking in the language of the apostle to limit the direction of Christian life, which is by this insignia to be hon-

* 1 Cor. ix., 24, 25.

ored. Then the word used to qualify the crown has a most significant application in other texts. In many passages it is rendered, by the translators of our version, "incorruptible;"* and in another it is introduced to describe the King eternal as also "immortal." Whatever it may express of glory, it is clear that the Imperishable Crown is to be distinguished in nature and substance from the other gifts of the Lord our Judge. Moreover, it is conditioned upon the most opposite experience in this life to that of a tried and tempted believer, to whom the Crown of Life is to be awarded. He, who would obtain this prize must do somewhat as well as endure. The same believer may receive both marks of the Divine approval, but they will be awarded for different reasons. Moses in his self-denial and consecration to service is said to have "had respect unto the recompense of the reward."† Towards this he hasted in all his leadership until he entered into rest. The Imperishable Crown he has won. Its glory will be his when the Lord cometh. He awaits with all saints his coronation. Living believers in the struggles with Satan and sin have not yet

* Rom. i., 23; 1 Cor. xv., 52; 1 Peter i., 4-23; iii., 4. † Heb. xi., 26.

attained. It is theirs to strive for the mastery, stimulated by the assurance that the Master's hand now holds the reward which they seek. He will not withdraw the vision from him, who is "temperate in all things."

The third crown promised by the Spirit is to be the badge of signal services rendered in the ministry of grace. It is called the Crown of Glory, in distinction from the Crown of Life and the Imperishable Crown. St. Peter presents it for the holy ambition of the elders and witnesses to the sufferings of Christ. His exhortations to readiness of mind, unselfishness of will and humility of life are enforced by the promise: "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."* Before every faithful pastor this mark of triumph is held aloft. It wins him away from the greed of "filthy lucre" and the overbearing tendency of "lords over God's heritage." It outshines every attraction of the world, which would divert him from the singleness and sacrifices of his mission. What in comparison with this certain portion are the flattery of fame or the accumulation

* 1 Peter v., 4.

of wealth? Though on the prairie with the pioneers of civilization, or among the heathen in the far off lands, he is rich in the assured prospect of an unfading exaltation when the chief Shepherd comes.

However discouraged at times may become the soul-winner, he can never know despondency, if his faith staggers not at this promise. Perseverance in seeking for the lost sheep becomes a settled habit of his life. It is a great dignity to plead with men "in Christ's stead," and it shall be discovered in that day to have been the more excellent way. For "they that be wise [teachers] shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."* With the apostle he learns to recognize in every soul brought to the knowledge of Jesus through his ministry an earnest of his hope. The joy, which he experiences in reconciling men to God, through the preaching of the cross of Christ, is a foretaste of that, which awaits him in the skies. And the gratitude of those, who return love for his labor, is a gleam from his crown. To himself, in times of meditation, and to those committed to his charge,

* Daniel xii., 3.

in seasons of communion, he voices the testimony of St. Paul: "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy."*

The fourth and last crown named in the Word of God, is promised by the pen of St. Paul to "all them that love His appearing." Its possessor may, for his sufferings' sake, receive the Crown of Life, by his active obedience obtain the Imperishable Crown, in recompense for unselfish service, be adorned by the chief Shepherd with the Crown of Glory, but in addition to these and because of his faithful waiting for Christ another distinction shall be added to these. Though in a prison with such an one as Paul the Aged, the believer may with confidence claim that "there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."† How in appearance or preparation for control this diadem may differ from those that have already engaged our meditation, is not taught us by

* 1 Thess. ii., 19, 20. † 2 Tim. iv., 8.

the Spirit. This only we know, that the title which it bears, and the character of soul which it honors, do not occur in connection with the previously promised crowns. It is solitary of its sort, and its assurance can only give comfort to a single class of Christians. If we so read the scriptures as to discover no possibility of a speedy epiphany of Christ, then is this reserved reward unrelated to our destiny. It is and can be nothing to all those, who pass by the plain promises and precepts of the Lord and His apostles, which divide the present dispensation from the coming of the Glorious Man for His saints by the space of "a moment," or "the twinkling of an eye." If the millennium is to precede the appearing, then why should we, who are at least a thousand years distant from the fulfilment of this promise, disturb our hearts by the thought that the "Lord doth come."* Far more rational is he who says "in his heart, my Lord delayeth His coming."† There can be no desire for His appearing which deserves to be crowned, unless there be a plain promise of its nearness. It seems to us that this passage itself indirectly, and yet undeniably, contains a war-

* Matt. xxiv., 42. † *Ibid.*, 48.

rant for the hope of those, who wait for the Lord. Be this as it may, why should the Christians, to whom this text is meaningless, seek to defraud those, who receive it literally, of the comfort and encouragement that it contains. It is the pole-star of the scriptures to multitudes. How long the Lord Jesus may "tarry," we know not. At any hour there may be "a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him."* The watcher's soul is all alert for the summons. His loins are girt with truth. In his hand is the staff of the exodus. O, land of rest, how near thou art! O, judgment-seat of Jesus, how thin are the clouds that veil thee! Through the rifts of cloudland shine rays from this righteous crown. It is "laid up" for him, whose hope can never be satisfied with less than the presence of the King.

It is said that in one of his historical naval engagements Lord Nelson perceived a ball of fire in the cloud of smoke, which shrouded the vessels of the enemy. So brilliant was the light that it left an abiding impression upon the retina of his eye. Look where he would thereafter this bright orb of fire was

* Matt. xxv., 6.

a part of his vision. It was imprinted on every object and became a glorious medium, through which all things were perceived. The likeness to this is in the faith-outlook of the believer, who has received without doubting this word of promise. The glory of the Crown of Righteousness is an inseparable part of his present life. This sign of his recompense stands in relief on all the cloud-scenes of his struggle and toil. They are transfigured by it, and the crown is interpreted by them.

The Master once wore a crown of thorns. But when He shall descend again the rainbow hues of many crowns will halo His head. It is sufficient for the disciple that he be as his Master. Welcome trial, toil, service and waiting! Soon, who can say how soon, will these all give place to triumph and reward. And we shall, as those who have suffered and striven for His sake, cast our crowns before the Lamb as it had been slain. Now we can bring Him nothing but sin and sorrow. Then the voice of our recorded services, inspired by grace, shall eternally praise Him, saying, "Thou art worthy to receive glory and honor and power."*

* Revel. iv., 11.

Oh, what is this splendor that beams on me now,
This beautiful sunrise that dawns on my soul,
While faint and far off land and sea lie below,
And under my feet the huge golden clouds roll ?

There are millions of saints in their ranks and degrees,
And each with a beauty and crown of his own ;
And there, far outnumbering the sands of the seas,
The nine rings of Angels encircle the throne.

And oh, if the exiles of earth could but win
One sight of the beauty of Jesus above,
From that hour they would cease to be able to sin,
And earth would be heaven ; for heaven is love.

But words may not tell of the Vision of Peace,
With its worshipful seeming, its marvellous fires ;
Where the soul is at large, where its sorrows all cease,
And the gift has outbidden its boldest desires.

Because I served Thee, were life's pleasures all lost ?
Was it gloom, pain, or blood, that won heaven for me ?
Oh, no ! one enjoyment alone could life boast,
And that, dearest Lord ! was my service of Thee.

I had hardly to give ; 'twas enough to receive,
Only not to impede the sweet grace from above ;
And, this first hour in heaven, I can hardly believe
In so great a reward for so little a love.

F. W. FABER.

X.

The Marriage of the Lamb.

As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.—Isaiah lxii., 5.

He that hath the bride is the bridegroom.—John iii., 29.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.—Matt. xxii., 2.



THE sequel of the Judgment Seat of Christ, and of the assignment of the crowns, will be the festal joy of those, whose union with Christ by faith on earth will then be manifested before the multitude of the heavenly host. The scene of this long foretold and figured transaction is to be the Glory-land. Freed from the fetters of the body of death, clothed upon with forms like to the Lord's

glorious body, and transferred to the present residence of Christ, the church will then be fully prepared for the realization of her deferred hope. Long since were believers "espoused to one husband" that grace might "present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."* In open acknowledgment we have professed this plighted relation before the world and claimed the promise: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God." Such true souls, at the period of which we write, will have concluded their "good profession before many witnesses,"† and have been received ‡ by the Christ Himself from the ministry of the Holy Ghost. The scrutiny of their services is over. They wear the crowns that on earth they have won. And now heaven rings with seraphic song. Hark! "I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."§ This is the

* 2 Cor. xi., 2. † 1 Tim. vi., 12. ‡ John xiv., 3. § Revel. xix., 6, 7.

indescribable portion of the saints until with the Lord they shall return to share His reign over the earth. For how long a space of time this privilege will continue we know not. But in relation and spirit it is the inauguration of the blessedness, which never again can be broken. Closer than present angelic life will be thereafter the union of believers, from the dispensation of Grace, with the royal Christ. "Forever with the Lord" is the sign-manual of their honor and glory. The marriage with the Lamb secures an inseparableness of presence and dominion. Impotent is human imagination to attain unto these exalted promises! Let us keep the words hid in our hearts and "hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." *

The scriptures are very specific in the gradual development of the truths, which attain their fullest expression in "the marriage of the Lamb." This, on careful comparison of passages, will be found to be one of the organic ideas of the Bible. Its germ is in Genesis, the progress of its growth is to be traced in the words of prophets, psalmist and the

* 1 Peter i., 13.

Master Himself, the open interpretation of the mystery is discovered in the epistles, and then the Revelation of St. John, the Seer on Patmos, projects on the clouds of the future the picture of the truth in outline and detail discriminating and satisfying. Like the tree of life, the cherubim and the blood of sacrifice, this statement of the believer's unestrageable union with the Lord both illustrates and vindicates, by its frequent occurrence, the unity and harmony of "all scripture." It will prove a most profitable exercise to search the pages of God's Word with these and other thoughts as key-truths. Much of Divine wisdom, now hidden to the superficial student, will reward such prayerful effort. More and more will the reader, who accepts this suggestion, marvel at the fulness and consent of the Divine testimony.

Marriage was instituted by an act of God. Its origin is the parallel of the establishment of the Sabbath and the appointment of sacrifice. The communications made by God to our first parents were a series of object-lessons, to which words of interpretation and exhortation were subsequently added. "The rest of God" from all His work which He had

made introduced by a positive obligation the observance of the seventh day, as holy time. The "coats of skins," with which the consciously naked sinners were Divinely clothed, were the types of a righteousness through the death of another, by which the guilty conscience should be covered. When it is remembered that until Noah built his altar on the top of Ararat no permission had been given to destroy animal life for food, and that immediately after the exclusion from Eden Abel "brought of the firstlings of his flock," and so "by faith offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain," the view just presented of the origin of sacrifice will be justified by the reader. The faith of Abel had for its object no words of promise except those contained in the curse upon the serpent. But the final triumph of the seed of the woman had been by the subsequent act of God illustrated in its method, and its resulting rest to the sinners. And now the repetition of this Divine action is recognized by faith as the acceptable form of worship, and the true mode of escape from the shame of guilt. Following this analogy, which would seem to be almost a law of early revelations, God by a miracle formed woman and

brought her unto the man. Among all the creatures of His hand there had not been found an help meet for Adam. This strange and special formation of Eve, so contrasted to all other creative methods, naturally arrests our curiosity. There is a significance in the recorded circumstances, which will more plainly appear as we proceed in our meditation. Just now it must suffice to note the fact that the woman was made for the man, and given to him to be his wife by a Divine act. To the record of the incident Moses appends the command, which is elsewhere repeated by our Lord: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh."* Monogamy has its law "from the beginning of the creation" in this Divine expedient.

Passing over intervening passages, which will afterwards be found in harmony with the truth, we turn to the language of St. Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians, when exhorting the saints to the observance of domestic relations. Once more we meet with the words just quoted from Moses and the Master. They serve to identify, beyond all dis-

* Gen. ii., 24; Mark x., 7.

pute, his reference to marriage. He wrote of this social and civil relation, which had its rise in Eden. Of it he declared : " This is a great mystery : but I speak concerning Christ and the church."* Doubtless the thought of the Spirit is that human marriage is a type, and was intended by God as a symbol, of the believer's oneness with his Lord. The body of true believers is comprehensively presented as sustaining this choice relation, but it is equally the consciousness and distinction of each trusting soul. The perversion of this living figure of an everlasting fact is ranked among sins as sacrilege itself. Love and reverence are to be the mutual duties of husband and wife, because these are the relative possessions of Christ and His own chosen people. The character and measure of these emotions are with equal distinctness defined. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." The disinterestedness and self-sacrifice of him, who in our Anglo-Saxon word is called the house-band, are to be derived from a remem-

* Eph. v., 32.

brance of the Lord's own love to him, and the freeness with which He suffered in his stead. The privilege is opened to him to represent in his home the life of the Lord Jesus in His church. Then with this precept is combined and correlated another: "Let the wife see that she reverence her husband." The believer's sweet submission of honorable fear before Jesus is made the outline of the wife's relation to the husband. Blessed is that home, whose family circle an apostle could truly describe, as "the church that is in thy house!" This is the Divine interpretation of the institution of marriage. It has a sacred mission in this dispensation. When that Divine purpose has been fulfilled, it must pass away. "The children of the resurrection neither marry nor are given in marriage." To misuse the ordinance, whilst it is of authority for purposes of pride or appetite, is not less a sin than the desecration of the Sabbath or dishonor done to the sacrifice of the Lord. For this reason, do the apostles by so many precepts, guard its purity and warn its perverters. How can the secret of this symbol be maintained if those so united have not like precious faith. "Be ye not

unequally yoked together with unbelievers.”* One of the infallible signs of the falling away from the faith in the latter times is “forbidding to marry.”† In opposition to this tendency of thought and life the apostle wrote to the scattered Hebrew Christians, “Marriage is honorable in all,”‡ and then adds a reprobation of those who sin against it. So jealously does the Spirit guard in the Word that community of life, liberty and love which no law can enforce, but which true and congenial souls experience in marriage.

With this as our guiding thought, how plain and precious now becomes the language of the Song of Solomon. The descriptions and dialogues of the “spouse” and “the beloved” are full of delight. We take the place of the “loved one,” and rejoice in the rapture which is hers, on hearing the voice of her friend. Joyously do we listen to the “beloved” as he tells the story of his satisfaction and admiration of her, who had but a few verses before bewailed herself as so unworthy. Hardly can we stay ourselves from crying out, as we read the charge of the bride, the same confession: “O, ye daughters of

* 2 Cor. vi., 14. † 1 Tim. iv., 3. ‡ Heb. xiii., 4.

Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, tell him that I am sick of love." The beauty and sublimity of this Song of Songs are the peculiar property of the spiritually minded believer. All others pass with indifference or scorn these pages. But when the soul, united by trust to Jesus, turns to the book, "it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled. . . . My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my beloved: and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock."* There is a new sweetness in the spirit of him, who communes daily with Jesus in the Word as the husband of the soul.

The union of the believer with the Lord is wrought by the Holy Ghost, "in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart."† Thenceforth "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."‡ "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."§ But the perfection of this bond is reserved until

*Song of Sol., v., 2, 4, 5. †*Ibid*, iii., 11. ‡1 Cor. vi., 17. § Eph. v., 30.

the Lord comes. So long as He is absent in His glorified body our joy of union cannot be full. His return from the skies will be the time when all that is taught by the type of marriage shall be realized. During these days of waiting the church is represented as widowed. She is really wedded, but in the separation from her Lord she wears the weeds of mourning. Her best days are to come. It is the sign of apostacy when a church or Christian refuses to recognize the sadness of this separation. "Hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow."* This is a most dangerous attitude of mind and life, for it is openly denounced by the Spirit of God. It is the error of Babylon, concerning which it is written: "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."† All spiritual pride and ecclesiastical pretension, all worldly gratification, and wayward self-seeking, all forgetfulness that the person

* Isaiah xlvii., 8. † Revel. xviii., 7.

and presence of Jesus are needed for our perfection, are sketched and condemned in these terrible words. The believer must separate himself from these thoughts and things which dishonor his Lord. To dally with such pleasures is spiritual adultery. The apostle does not hesitate so to describe those, who "know not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God." *

To withdraw one's self from such associations is to fast. This duty of the Christian life has lost the place and prominence, which it possesses in the Word, and will regain in the purposes of those, who wait for the Lord. Its theory and relation are not left to ecclesiastical prescription. The Master solved all the questions, which the believer can ask about it, and in the explanation asserted His own marriage with His disciples. "Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days."† This is the title of the Old

* James iv., 4. † Mark ii., 19, 20.

Testament, which, on many occasions the Master applied to Himself, and on others received from those who addressed Him. Whilst in the company of His disciples there was neither method nor motive for asceticism on their part. They were sufficiently separated from the world by His companionship. Moreover, how could they do other than rejoice in His presence? The bridegroom has been absent these eighteen hundred years and more from His church. This is the season to which so long ago He pointed with the injunction, "then shall they fast in those days." These two truths are again associated by Jesus in the parable of the ten virgins. The approach of the bridegroom is the expectation which inspired the virgin's service. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." But there was a distinction in even this common experience. It was made very plain when "there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." The watchers, who were true in their preparation, "went in with Him to the marriage," whilst the others sought, when too late, to repair the insincerity of their professions. Such a withdrawal from the

seductions of sin and pleasures is imperative if the believer is to welcome his Lord with full joy. The Bridegroom is on His return. His last message was, "Surely, I come quickly." The bride, all impatient for His appearing, looks through all the ordinances and scriptures with the heart-sick prayer, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."* And to be consistent with her desire, she applies herself to careful, determined, watchful consecration in service, "for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."†

It is worthy of note, in our meditation upon this truth, that the scene of our Lord's first miracle, while fulfilling His mission of redemption, was "a marriage in Cana of Galilee."‡ Bearing in mind the accumulated testimony of God's Word upon this Paradise type of His union with His church, this fact is more than a coincidence. It takes rank with such incidents as the Transfiguration, the washing of His disciples' feet, and the last supper. These were all parables in act, designed and adapted to impress with peculiar force His spoken words. They set forth the several parts of His one great plan of

* Rev. xxii., 20. † Matt. xxv., 13. ‡ John ii., 1.

salvation and sanctification. All doubt in connection with the marriage and its Divine meaning would seem to be dissipated by the appended record of the evangelist. The details of the marvel were wrought by the Master with a defined and recognized purpose. In them Jesus "manifested forth his glory." The word "glory" is used, which is the indisputable description in all parallel passages of His exalted condition and final triumph. Far beyond the temporary influence, which the mysterious change of water into wine wrought in the company of the guests, was the intention of the Master. The occurrence stands in the gospel as at least an illustration of the first scene of His full manifestation of Himself in the marriage-feast, which all the saints shall share at His second coming. The very symbolism is sustained in the fuller prophecy of Revelation. The wine was produced for the bridegroom's honor. To him did the ruler of the feast offer his congratulations. Even so shall it be when at the great feast of the Glory-land the commonest of earthly experiences and possessions shall at the Bridegroom's bidding be transmuted into the wine, which alone can make glad the heart of man. "Until that day when

I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom,"* is the Master's limitation of the days of grace. Then fellowship with His people shall perfect the outline of His first earthly miracle.

So soon as the carols of "the great multitude" shall have introduced "the marriage of the Lamb," the believers shall be presented "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."† Clean and bright will be the resplendent purity of the characters, with which they shall be clothed. Long since in the blood of the Lamb have they washed their robes and made them white. "His wife hath made herself ready." She has received from her adorable husband that marriage settlement, which shall forevermore enrich her as a "joint-heir with Christ." And now the gates of praise are wide opened. Bursts of heavenly song are wafted to the Seer. The light of the excellent glory blinds his sight in the vision. He has perceived and heard more than it is lawful or possible to utter. With the angel's benediction he returns to the saints still in the struggle of life. In what ecstasy of emphasis does he record the words: "Blessed are they which

* Matt. xxvi., 29. † Jude, 24.

are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.”*

The cultivation of conscious union with Christ is the present preparation, to which all believers are constrained by this blessed hope. The Judgment Seat of Christ is the monitor of diligence and zeal in service, but the controlling motive of the marriage-supper is the blessedness of oneness with Christ in the participation of His grace and the promise of His glory. From all defection of heart and deflection of life the Christian is recalled by the Divine assurance and summons: “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord ; for I am married unto you : and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.”† No other influence, except the love of Divine condescension, is employed by the Spirit in the renewal of the first and lost love of believers. The heart of the Bridegroom is not changed. With the cords of love He draws again to Himself those, who have shown themselves faithless to their espousals. What a comfort to many a desponding and almost despairing believer has been the discovery of this Divine method of restoration. Divorce is not known in the vocabulary of grace.

* Revel. xix., 9. † Jer. iii., 14.

The persevering pursuit of a realization of Christ's love to himself, and the reciprocation in devotion of such perceived affection, are the solitary signs in the experience of the saint that he shall "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."* He may be but a beggar in this world, but if true to the Bridegroom he shall be "carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom,"† when his waiting days are over. It will not be questioned that the figure of the feast is maintained in this parable of Jesus, and that a distinguished station and companionship is assured to all, who have lived in the spirit of Lazarus. But the Master makes the motive more impressive in another parable and connects this reserved privilege with His personal return. We close our meditation with His words. What more need we to stimulate us to spirituality of heart and separateness of life than this revelation of His purpose? Let us flee from all thoughts and things that would seduce us from our fidelity. Who knoweth how near the Bridegroom may be? Now is He preparing a place for us. God forbid that any believer should grieve that Spirit of grace, who

* Matt. viii., 11. † Luke xvi., 22.

is preparing him for the place. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and will make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. . . . Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not." *

* Luke xii., 35-37, 40.

While thus along the star-paved firmament
The Bride, awakened from the holy rest
Of ages, hastened to her mother earth,
There to assume her hymeneal robes,
And, with the residue of God's elect
Made perfect, wait the advent of her Lord,
Himself the Bridegroom on the right of power,
Where in the heaven of heavens He sate embosom'd,
Rose in His awful Majesty, and deign'd
Ascend the chariot of Omnipotence,
Borne onward by cherubic shapes.
..... Human He was
In every lineament, yet likest God,
Flame girdled, like a sardine stone afire,
Pure bright amid impenetrable dark,
Insufferably radiant, till it wrote

Mercy's great symbol on the clouds of wrath,
And with its arch of soften'd rainbow hues,
Gold, emerald, and vermilion spann'd the throne.

* * * * *

The Bridegroom met the Bride alone? Himself
In glorified humanity supreme,
Incarnate Light: and she like Him in glory,
No spot or wrinkle on her holy brow,
No film upon her robes of dazzling white,
Most beautiful, most glorious: every saint
Perfect in individual perfectness;
And each to each so fitly interlink'd,
Join'd and compact, their countless millions seem'd,
One body by one Spirit inspired and moved,
The various members knit in faultless grace,
The feeblest as the strongest necessary,
Nor schism, nor discord, nor excess, nor lack;
The Ideal of all beauty realized,
The Impersonation of delight and love.

And the Lord look'd on her; and in His eye
Beam'd admiration infinite, Divine,
She was His chosen, His elect....

* * * * *

Wife of the Lamb, known only by His name
Oh finite image of the Infinite:
Oh holy creaturehood, perfect at last:
Oh true Self raised to true unselfishness,
Living for Him alone, who is thy life,
All and in all for Him as He for God.

And when instinctively we raised our eyes
From contemplation of the heavenly forms,
Now ours for ever, to the Prince we loved,
To thank Him who had made us, behold

These bodies of our glory could sustain
More of His glory than the naked spirit ;
Our pure affections His affection's clasp'd ;
And every form within us had some hold
On His omnipotence. Like imaged like.
And, as with us, so was it with the rest :
To all a vast promotion of their bliss,
To each the increase, as each sow'd on earth.
Love only can know love. And as they loved,
They knew Him. As they knew Him, they return'd
His lineaments of beatific light :
So glory is proportionate to grace.

But hearken, now a concert of sweet sounds
On all sides imperceptibly arose,
From twice ten thousand flutes the ravish'd air
Soliciting, and whispering in all hearts,
The marriage of the Lamb was come.

E. H. BICKERSTETH.

XI.

The Coming with Glory.

The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.—Zech. xiv., 5.
The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels.—
Matt. xvi., 27.

Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they
also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because
of Him.—Rev. i., 7.



THE portion of the saints in the Glory-land will be their preparation for participation in the enthronement of the Lord over the whole earth. Full of joy as will be their experience, when crowned and satisfied at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, still this shall not be their final state. They shall find a higher measure of bliss in the devotion to service, for which they have been called, claimed and glorified. "These are they which follow the

Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.* From that moment of rapture their lives are inseparable from the presence of the Lord. When He cometh to execute vengeance and exalt righteousness among those, who abide on the earth, they must form the train of His glory. In all unfulfilled promise they are appointed to an active share of "His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act."†

A better transition of thought from the celestial condition of the changed believers to their super-earthly station and office could not be phrased, than that which succeeds in Revelation the description of the Marriage Feast: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written that no man knew but He Himself: and He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven

* Revel. xiv., 4. † Isaiah xxviii., 21.

followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.”* In symbolical language does the Seer on Patmos present the descent from the Glory-land of the King with those, who attend and share the brightness of His coming. Whilst feasting with them on high He summons them to war :

“ ‘My Father’s will be done.
His will is Mine. The fated hour has struck
Of battle. On Mine ears but now there fell
The short, sharp cry of Israel’s travail-pangs.
Come with Me, saints and angels, and behold
My foes and yours prostrate beneath our feet.
Now is the day of vengeance in My heart,
And now the year of My redeemed is come.’

He spake; and lo! that festive scene of love
Quickly appear’d a camp of mustering war,
From whose cerulean gates, wide open thrown,
Messiah seated on a snow-white horse
Of fiery brightness, as the Lord of Hosts,
Apparell’d in a vesture dipp’d in blood,
And many crowns upon His sacred head,
Rode conquering and to conquer forth. And those
Who lately at His marriage feast reclined,
Appear’d an army, clothed in robes of white,
And mounted like their Lord on steeds of fire,
A glorious retinue. On either side,
Like wings of light-arm’d troops, innumerable,
The hosts of angels, ranged in order, march’d ;
And as they march’d, to sound of martial trumps,
Poured forth prophetic strains of Jubilee.”†

* Revel. xix., 11-14. † E. H. Bickersteth.

Previous to this descent of the King with His court a series of revolutions, apostasies and tribulations will have convulsed the history of the earth. The surprise at the disappearance of the saints by the glorious rapture will be succeeded by commotions both in church and state, which are presented in the Word as the signs of the Lord's coming. So numerous are the references to this stage in the development of God's purpose, that it would be needful to surrender all the space given to this meditation, if we should attempt to quote a tithe of them. "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."* "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."† "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?"‡ "As it was in the days of Noe as it was in the days of Lot even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."§ There is not in the whole Book of God a passage descriptive of the reign of Christ, which does not predict this preceding condition of

* 1 Tim. iv., 1. † 2 Tim. iii., 1. ‡ 2 Peter iii., 3, 4. § Luke xvii., 26, 28, 30.

things among men. Every text bearing upon the topic will be found, on examination, to point to this terrible close of the present dispensation of the gospel. They are without warrant in the Word, who are looking for the conversion of the world by the preaching of the Cross and the extending influence of the church. In no portion of scripture is such a hope justified. All that the gospel was designed to accomplish was less than this. The commission given to His disciples by the ascending Lord was express: "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."* This is the limited office of all the ministries of the present dispensation. "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."† So far from the expectation of the Spirit is the universal, or even general submission of mankind to the crucified Jesus, that, in one of the earliest councils of the church, He made known through Simeon His purpose in visiting the Gentiles "to take out of them a people for His name."‡ How cheering, had it been

* Acts i., 8. † Matt. xxiv., 14. ‡ Acts xv., 14.

truthful, would have been such an assurance of success to the early Christians! Numberless opportunities are given in the epistles for its pertinent expression. That it was withheld is an indication of the mind of the Spirit, made plain in the other scriptures, which enumerate believers as a "little flock," before whom there lies a dark parenthesis of persecution, opposition and trial until shall be matured the "Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."*

The error, into which the Thessalonian church was betrayed, gave an occasion for the presentation by St. Paul of very positive instruction on this topic. They had been troubled in mind, through rumor and a letter which claimed this apostle's authority, by the fear that the church had even then been "caught up," and that they had been left and rejected. This is the force of the phrase: "as that the day of Christ is at hand." In every other use of the word within the New Testament it is rendered in the sense of "being present." "But these Thessalonians imagined it to be already come."† Manifestly their condition was a terrible one if they had nothing, to which they

* Luke xii., 32. † Alford.

might look forward, but judgment and fiery indignation when the Lord should appear with the saints from the Glory. To banish this dread and to correct the conviction, out of which it had sprung, the apostle employs these explicit words: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. . . . For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only He who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way: And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming."* Without entering into an extended exposition, it is certain that the fore-running facts of His coming are not a growth of the spiritual church and a world-wide extension of the gospel. Precisely the opposite to this picture of the fancy is the truth of God. Even the Holy Ghost, who now hindereth the development of the mystery of iniquity, will be taken out of the way. The power of the "Man of Sin" and "that Wicked" shall be unresisted until their final destruction, not by this

* 2 Thess. ii., 3, 7, 8.

gospel, but by the glorious coming of Christ. These words are the echo of the prophecy of Daniel,* which should be examined in connection with them. "Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom,"† is the Divine definition of the limit of this malign control and the method of its annihilation.

To all these passages let us add the plain words of Jesus. After sketching the sorrows, which should befall Jerusalem and the Jewish nation at the hands of their Roman conquerors, and giving in outline the mission and ministry of His believing people, He addressed Himself to the incidents which should usher in His second coming and the end of this dispensation. The conversation from which we quote was held with four of His disciples, named by St. Mark, "as He sat upon the mount of Olives, over against the temple."‡ It contains full answers to three anxious questions, which had been suggested by His prediction as He departed from the temple. "Tell us," said they, "when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of

* Dan. xi., 36. † *Ibid*, vii., 22. ‡ Mark xiii., 3.

the end of the world?" The context will be found to cover the scope of the first two queries, whilst the third is satisfied by a prediction not of triumph but of tribulation. Like all previous dispensations, the present is to close with apparent failure. The purposes of grace must rule even amidst ruin. Grace cannot fail. "Though we believe not yet He abideth faithful." As it was in the Garden, and in the times of the Flood, and at the first coming of Jesus, so shall it also be when this age shall end. The dispensations are parallel in this respect, until the kingdom shall be established. The defection of formalists, the defeat of the church, and the despair of the world are the marks of the impending crisis in the relations of our race to God and His Christ. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days . . . and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."*

* Matt. xxiv., 29-31.

It may be confidently affirmed, for we have the full warrant of the Word, that in no possible sense is the next dispensation to be a development of the present. With the scenes of sorrow already detailed will "the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."* The words of the gospel, like the preaching of Noah, will have done their work. And the interposition of a new expedient of Glory will introduce another order of things. This is plainly taught, so far as the idea of government is concerned, by the Divine interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's vision. Every succeeding dominion has incorporated the history of the past. Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and the present sub-divided sovereignties have lineal relations to one another. This must be the course of history until the completion of the present age. But the next experience of earth is to be, not a further addition by development to this "great image, whose brightness was excellent," but "a stone cut without hands, which smote the image upon his feet . . . and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." The coming kingdom has no conceivable connection, as

* Luke xxi., 24.

by cause and effect, with the nationalities of to-day. It will be introduced by a supreme sovereignty. "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed : and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."* An equally marked contrast is drawn between the present and proximate condition of the church. Now believers are in mortal bodies, then shall they "bear the image of the heavenly." Their present education and discipline are under the direction of the Holy Ghost, but "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."† "Now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known."‡ With the resurrection and the rapture the relation of believers as subjects is to cease. Thenceforth "we shall also reign with Him."§ Not less evident is the change to be wrought in the national character and worship of the Jewish people. No longer shall Zion "be plowed as a field . . . and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest. But in the last days it shall come to pass,

* Daniel ii., 44. † Coloss. iii., 4. ‡ 1 Cor. xiii., 12. § 2 Tim. ii., 12.

that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”* The recovery of their lost estate is not to be attained by natural processes, but by a Divine intervention, unknown to present civilization. The choice of Israel is to be vindicated “when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously.”†

The analogy of all previous dispensations is thus maintained by prophecy. No law of outgrowth is there in the purpose of grace. At every change in the methods of His dealing with men our Lord has made a new manifestation of Himself. This has sealed the faith or the rebellion of those, who lived before its gift, and has introduced new truth for the trust and obedience of those who should come after.

* Micah iii., 12; iv., 1, 2. † Isaiah xxiv., 23.

The innocence of our first parents in Eden was lost through disobedience. The temptations of the serpent were successful, and sin brought with it the curse and shame. To have eaten of the tree of life and lived forever in that lost condition would have been for them an incomparable calamity, as well as the final overthrow of the salvation of our race. To avert this possible increase of sorrow and suffering the dispensation of the garden was brought to an immediate end. God "drove out the man: and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."* These signs should not be confounded. The one expressed rejection; the other exhibited reconciliation. The flaming sword was the symbol of wrath, but the cherubim mingled mercy even with the exclusion. They served to encourage faith in the promise of the victorious seed, through whom at last man should gain re-admission. But neither of the twain belonged by development to the closing dispensation. They were sovereign manifestations of God, which were given, when through sin the original revelation

* Genesis iii., 24.

made by God failed in its influence. With these tokens at the gate of Eden was opened the dispensation of the patriarchs and prophets. It was an entirely new scheme for the declaration of God's salvation. In no sense was it the development of that which had preceded its appointment. Through ages it ran its course. It became rich with truth and types, but it too failed. The law was weak through the flesh. "But when the fulness of the time was come God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." The cruelty of high priests and scribes, clamoring for the blood of Christ, is a palpable proof that the system of the law had neither resulted favorably for man, nor recognized the incoming Galilean Jesus as the fruitage of its principles. Once more God thrust His hand into the tide of history. Parallel with this statement was the supplemental gift of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. He came because it was expedient for the believer that Jesus should go away. The incarnate Christ was not sufficient for the manifestation of grace. Surely it will not be claimed that the

cloven tongues of fire and the great wind, which certified the advent of the Holy Ghost, were lineally related to the dispensation of the Lord's earthly life? Like all that had gone before them, these days of God's tabernacling with man were followed by an altogether new, and theretofore unsuspected, revelation of God. It is under the ministry of the present Spirit of Grace that we are passing our lives of privilege and responsibility. The believer in this dispensation has the advantage of all the saints of the ended ages. Truth is clearer. Heaven is nearer. God, in His covenant promises and perfections, is never absent from our lives. The office of the Holy Ghost is to glorify Jesus in His finished work and to herald His coming reign. But the hour is timed in God's purpose, when He shall "be taken out of the way."* This dispensation must close in darkness. The saints of all ages have been safely gathered into rest, even though the systems under which they were educated and disciplined were Divinely laid aside. So shall it be with the believers through the gospel. But the world must be condemned for its misuse of the ministry of the Holy Ghost. The

* 2 Thess. ii., 7.

harmony of the purposes of God is maintained in the prophecy, which points to the Divine plan for ending the present and opening the immediate dispensation. Not by evolution, but by another and an entirely inconceivable event will the coming kingdom be introduced. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Sad indeed to living sinners will be the coming of Christ with His glorified saints. The Judgment of War and of Wrath shall then be begun. Let men be warned. Let the saints in holy trembling wait. "For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."

The Lord will come! but not the same
As once in lowly form He came,
A silent Lamb to slaughter led,
The bruised, the suffering, and the dead.

* 2 Thess. i., 7, 8.

The Lord will come ! a dreadful form,
With wreath of flame, and robe of storm ;
On cherub wings, and wings of wind,
Anointed Judge—of human-kind.

Can this be He, who wont to stray
A pilgrim on the world's highway,
By power oppressed, and marked by pride ?
O God ! is this the Crucified ?

Go tyrants ! to the rocks complain !
Go seek the mountains' cleft in vain !
But faith, victorious o'er the tomb,
Shall sing for joy, the Lord is come.

BP. REGINALD HEBER.

XII.

The Kingdom of Glory.

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.—Psalm lxxii., 8.

The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.—Rev. xi., 15.

We shall also reign with Him.—2 Tim. ii., 12.



THE “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints”* shall begin the true Golden Age of this earth, of which philosophers have speculated and poets sung through all the generations. There is a subtle conviction in all thinking minds that the best days of our planet-home are yet to come. Each past age of gold has been an iron age too. It has not satisfied even the dreamers of our race. The ideal of social perfection

* 1 Thess. iii., 13.

has never yet been approached by government or in history. For this the world waits. Even irrational creatures, in the striking figure concealed by the Greek word which St. Paul used, "now seized by an higher impulse, by a supernatural longing, seem to stretch out their heads and look forth spiritually for a spiritual object of their existence."* There must be substance to correlate this universal instinct of man. As light is related to the eye, sound to the ear, flavor to the taste, water to the fin, air to the wing, so must there be somewhat adjusted in the purpose of God to this natural longing of our race. The possession of the faculty is a prophecy of the fact. If this be not so, then man is a greater riddle than the world contains. As immortality answers the demands of his spirit, so does the resurrection and enthronement of righteousness solve the hopes for his body, that he cannot silence.

The dignity of the believer, which is now a dogma, will in that day become a demonstration. Through the veil of humiliation, at present cast over the Christian, somewhat of the grandeur of his relations and the greatness of his station cannot

* Lange on Rom. viii., 19-23.

fail to be perceived. He is a prince in disguise, but his noble spirit and style serve to reveal him to even a carnal criticism. When the Lord cometh, his royal birth and heirship shall be expressed in his incorruptible body and more than angelic mission. The contrast between them and living men in mortal bodies will be incomparably manifested, when the saints sit with Christ in His throne and partake with Him in His dominion and judgment of the world. It is a very false representation of scripture which pictures the church as subjects of the coming kingdom. They shall indeed acknowledge a submission to their Lord, but towards the inhabitants of the earth they will assert a majesty. For this they will have been qualified by their glorification and to this they have even now been assigned by prophecy and promise.

In whatsoever direful work at the opening of the Kingdom of Glory, the enthroned Christ shall be engaged, they must bear their solemn part. They are not the executioners of wrath but they are, in a mysterious relation to the Lord, to "judge the world."* "The reapers are the angels."†

* 1 Cor. vi., 2. † Matt. xiii., 39.

“The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.”† With such a clearance of its evil shall the reign of the thousand years be introduced over the earth. The graphic description of this judgment of the living nations is given by the Master in unmistakeable words. To refer the passage to any other event than that, which marks the inauguration of His kingdom, is to do violence to both the context and comparative scripture. He speaks of the coincidents of His coming. The persons He summons will be alive upon the earth when He appears. There is no reference in any verse to the dead of either this dispensation, or of the great tribulation. Moreover the question, which shall determine the destiny of those whose persons are approved or condemned, will not be their relation to the gospel, which will have ended its mission, but their treatment of “the least of these my brethren.” These features of the prophecy would seem to protect it from that perversion, which confounds it with the judgment of the unjustified dead before the great white throne,

† Matt. xiii., 41.

at the close of the millennium. With these principles of interpretation in mind let us read the Master's prediction: "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."* To those approved is opened "the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," while the rejected ones are condemned to "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."† The Old Testament is filled with prophecies which depict in detail the progress and sequence of the events, that will prepare the earth for its millennium of righteousness and rest. It does not lie

* Matt. xxv., 31, 32. † Jude 14, 15.

within our purpose to pursue this line of thought farther than to indicate some of the more marked scenes. And these must be grouped in a paragraph, though pages could be filled with citations, which support them.

When the nations have been thus Divinely arrested in their course of rebellion, Jerusalem shall become "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth."* The temple and the city shall be rebuilt and the ceremonial of the restored tribes re-established for a memorial of grace. In the midst of the city shall be the Lord for "an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."† Thenceforth "thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name."‡ "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart."§ The name of the city from that day shall be Jehovah Shammah—"the Lord is there."|| To this period belong the prophecies of Isaiah, Jere-

* Psalms xlviii., 2; Isaiah lxii., 7. † *Ibid*, lx., 19. ‡ *Ibid*, lxii., 2. § Jer. iii., 17. || Ezek. xlviii., 35.

miah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and other writers in the Old Testament, who foretell the eminence, prosperity and influence of the Holy Land and the chosen people. Every attempt to wrest their literal meaning will be found fruitless, if the student is sincere in his search for truth. The context in every passage will present suggestions to withstand allegorizers to the face. The Spirit of God is in no part of revelation more explicit, than in these foreshadowings of the glory of Israel. "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."* The result of this rejection of the rebellious nations, and the ingathering of the ancient people of God will be the establishment of the dominion of the Prince of Peace. "Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."† "They shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they

* Rom. xi., 26. † Isaiah xi., 5, 9.

shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." * "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." † In bare outline only are we able, with the space at our command, to trace the entrancing features of the Kingdom of Glory.

Wonderful as are the words, which declare the condition of those who shall dwell upon the earth during this Theocracy, the privilege and portion of the believers of this dispensation shall far transcend description. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." ‡ Perhaps our station and office shall be analogous to those of the angels in the dispensation of grace. As in mysterious forms messengers were sent to the patriarchs, prophets, chosen saints, and the Master Himself, in His earthly life, so it may be that our glorified bodies will fit us for visible or invisible service. There is a lesson on this truth in the resurrection life of Jesus, which is worthy of sacred thought. And yet, whilst equal with the

* Jer. xxxi., 34. † Hab. ii., 14. ‡ 1 Cor. ii., 9.

angels in exaltation, how much better the relation of those, who are taught to claim: "now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."* The only approach to a definition of the believer's relation to the reign of Christ is given by St. John in words which, more than all others contained in his marvelous Revelation, appear to be divested of symbolism: "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."†

But to this session with Christ in His throne of government must be added from the Word of God the office of priesthood, to which the believers are to be assigned. The praises of heaven are the peculiar privilege of saints from earth. The completeness of the service is expressed in the carols of the four and twenty elders. These have their number, in the figurative description of St. John, from the division of the priesthood in the time of David. The appointment of the twenty-four courses of priests was

* 1 John iii., 2. † Revel. xx., 4.

the final development of the designation of Aaron's family, who had themselves been substituted for the father and eldest son of each house, in this same office. And now the number, which expresses the perfectness of the priesthood, is employed by the Spirit to enforce the thought, that at last the highest stage of mediation has been reached, and the companies of spiritual priests are complete. Before the descent to the earth with the King of Glory, St. John in vision beholds them fall down before the Lamb, "having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."* With this heavenly calling the saints of all ages shall be recognized in the Kingdom of Glory. The samples of their songs given in Revelation exclude all other subjects but those of praise. They adore the King in His beauty. They voice the submission

* Revel. v., 8.

and rejoicing of the earthly subjects of His reign. Why may we not suppose that often, as on high festivals of joy, they will sing in mid-air? Even over Bethlehem's plain the Shekinah chased away the shadows of midnight and song broke the silence of the shepherd's watch. Surely higher will be the notes of adoration and thanksgiving than those of prophecy. The world in its millennial peace and rest will be girdled with the praises of the glorified priesthood of saints.

The Kingdom of Glory will be the contrast in principle and spirit of all previous dominions. Though invested at the opening of each dispensation with the sovereignty of the earth, man has at each experiment proved a failure. Adam and Noah had parallel permission and charges to subdue and have dominion over the earth and all lower forms of life. Both equally were deprived of their sway through sin. When Jesus came with the self-applied title of "Son of Man," which no other lips than His ever lisped during His earthly life, it was the purpose of God to re-introduce the abdicated kingdom. The natural right to this throne of the forces and forms of the earth was established by covenant obliga-

tions to David and his seed. The two claims from his days are interwoven and identified. The ruling man must sit "upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever."* Matthew in his gospel emphasizes this view of our Lord's mission. The genealogy which he gives traces the lineal descent of Christ through Joseph from Solomon and so vindicates His legal right to the succession of David. The Magi came to Jerusalem with the curious query: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?"† John Baptist proclaimed Him in this royal character: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."‡ The substance of His own preaching at the first was the repetition of His fore-runner's announcement.§ The disciples were charged to herald the same dispensation.|| Thus, by title and claim, did Jesus assume the lost sovereignty of man over things and of the Messiah over Israel. His miracles were performed as the Son of Man. They expressed the lordship over nature, which was the original endowment of our race, but which since

* Isaiah ix., 7. † Matt. ii., 2. ‡ *Ibid.* iii., 2. § *Ibid.* iv., 17. || *Ibid.* x., 7.

the Fall had been in abeyance. The wind and the seas obeyed His voice. The conscious water blushed to own its Lord. Diseases were destroyed, death was disarmed, and devils were exorcised at His bidding. The God-Man was the Son of Man. In Himself were united the powers of Deity and an unfallen humanity. There is a meaning, which is not always recognized, in His words to His wondering disciples: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father."* The recognition of Jesus was refused. The sample Man was despised and rejected. While supernatural powers were exercised by the apostles for a time, they soon ceased. Faith in the kingdom failed. It would be difficult to give any satisfactory reason for the sudden cessation of extraordinary gifts and powers in the church. There are many existing theories, but not one of them gains its authority from the Word. Philosophy has no office in such a matter as this. The sin of unbelief is the thief. As under previous dispensations so since the incarnation of Jesus has it robbed man of his royalty.

* John xiv., 12.

All governments, both in state and church, have reversed the principles of His kingdom. And they have been the causes and occasions of unceasing social convulsions and revolution. He proposed the power of weakness. The defeated Christ was enthroned and pronounced the King. Submission was to be the synonymn of strength. Exaltation was to be wrought by humbling one's self. Enrichment of spirit and station was to be sought by esteeming other better than one's self, and looking for the advancement of other rather than self. The culmination of such a kingdom was to be, and will be, the child of prophecy,* who though apparently all weakness shall be the leader of the wildest forces and the subduer of most contrary natures. This was "the Gospel of the Kingdom," which Jesus preached but which all governmental history has opposed. Might has made right. Ambition has worn the purple. Self has supplanted Jehovah. Like the beasts of Daniel's vision,† each "dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly," and all devouring and breaking in pieces and stamping the residue with their feet, have been the succes-

* Isaiah xi., 6. † Daniel vii.

sive dynasties of universal rule. The world waits for rest. Never can it come by the principles which prevail in present national and ecclesiastical life. Commotions must continue so long as appeal is made to pride and force. "Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him."* When the crowned Christ, ever wearing the marks of His dying, shall receive His throne, it will be in His character as the "Son of Man." To Him shall the Ancient of days give "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."† When the Messiah, once "cut off but not for Himself," shall thus be confessed, the festival of earth will have come. A Lamb shall be in the midst of the throne. Love shall be the life of all that gather beneath its sovereignty and shadow. "Of the in-

* Ezek. xxi., 26, 27. † Daniel vii., 14.

crease of His government and peace there shall be no end.”*

The exemplification of the agencies of the coming Kingdom is to be sought in the earthly life of our Lord. The forces that He used were purely passive. It was an exceptional fact in His ministry when the words of woe trembled on His lips, or a fig tree withered as He passed. Even these were associated with scenes of submission. His path to the throne was beset by temptations, trials and troubles of every sort. Satan was ever suggesting a shorter way, but He resolutely refused to take it. Each onset in the wilderness had for its underlying principle the contrast of His purpose. Hunger was preferred to selfishness. Not even the pinnacle of the temple could persuade Him to presumption. The offer of “all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them,”† was the last and least of the schemes of the “prince of this world.” Never could He receive them until, by the introduction and recognition of a King who should rule through sacrifice, they could “become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ.”* His reply was

* Isaiah ix., 7. † Matt. iv., 8.

a rebuke, which manifested His hidden thought. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve," was the accepted path of submission and self-surrender. This, again, He chose, when they "would come and take Him by force to make Him a king," for "He departed again into a mountain Himself alone."† The talk about the tribute money did not entangle Him. It furnished the occasion for that law of complete loyalty: "Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Thus by yielding did He conquer. And yet, never was there withheld the full claim of His majesty. Though He emphasized His method, He never reserved His motive. Every sorrow was endured as a step from the depth to the height. His own lifting up by the Cross was declared to be a part of His plan to draw all men unto Him. His self-restraint on the way from Gethsemane to the Judgment Hall, when He might have summoned to His rescue more than twelve legions of angels, was self-explained as a necessity of His Kingdom. Before Pilate He boldly avowed His royal character,

* Revel. xi., 15. † John vi., 15.

but instantly contrasted the scheme of His coming sovereignty with that, which had charged Him with sedition. "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."* Though about to be crushed by Rome, He feared not failure in His mission. The Cross was the foot of the Throne. Through sufferings He knew that He was to be perfected. And in the face of its immediate endurance, He cheerfully testified, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."† Yes, even while hanging in the agonies of crucifixion, He claimed power to admit into paradise a fellow-sufferer, who penitently prayed for remembrance "when Thou comest into Thy kingdom."‡

Throughout His life, which ended on Golgotha, and the forty days of His appearance in the risen body, He spake openly to His disciples of their future station when His sovereignty should be confessed. In not a single instance did He repress their expect-

* John xviii., 36. † *Ibid.*, 37. ‡ Luke xxiii., 42.

tation of a reign. His only warnings in several parables were against a false and fatal error, which was prevalent among them, "that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear."* Not even the selfish request of the mother of two of His disciples "that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom,"† was denied. It led Him to speak of the baptism of blood and the cup of bitterness, which must be the precedents of such exaltation. But not even such submission can purchase nearness to the King. "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father,"‡ are the words with which the Master protected the sovereignty of its bestowal. Perhaps the opposition of present government to the coming kingdom is more forcibly and sententiously expressed in the context of this recorded incident than in any other part of the gospels. Jesus called the ten disciples, filled with indignation at the self-seeking of the two, and said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among

* Luke xix., 11. † Matt. xx., 21. ‡ *Ibid*, 23.

you : but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant : even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." * This was the tone of all His teaching, and the basis of all His life from birth to burial. And when He shall "restore again the kingdom to Israel," † this shall be the code of His control. Gentleness shall make Him great forever. Whilst His days of humiliation are over His character cannot change. The Kingdom of Glory shall have kinship in spirit to the dispensation of grace. Its rest and rejoicing shall have the same cause and carols. Whatever of outward pomp and circumstance may be added, the principles of the reign shall be the same forever, as they were yesterday, and are to-day.

The present exaltation of Jesus is the pledge that these principles shall be enthroned and control the earth. "We see not yet all things put under Him : but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." * There has not been a

* Matt. xx., 25-28. † Acts i., 6.

shadow of turning from the service of grace in the coming King since His ascension. His majesty is attractive. His light is resolved in the rainbow of the covenant, which is round about His heavenly throne. His commands are no more grievous than when He spake on earth. If it be possible His promises are fuller, richer, more royal, since through apostles and by epistles to the churches He opened the secrets of His grace and love. It is marvellous that there can be sympathy in heaven with the sorrow of earth. But this is a declared sign of His present station. With these characters and offices shall the King descend. Never shall there be a change of weapons. Earth shall recognize the might of right, the strength of weakness, the honor of humility, and the crown of compassion, when Jesus of Nazareth shall be King.

The kingdom of heaven is still on earth. It has not yet been caught up. Its subjects are in training for the thrones in the regeneration, "when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory."† The invisible church shall be the queen of the King of Glory. Its members are now scattered through-

* Heb. ii., 8, 9. † Matt. xix., 23.

out all bodies of professed Christians. They constitute "the mystical body of Christ, which is the blessed company of all faithful people." Bound together by mutual submission and service, they bow with reverence before a common and coming King. Their zeal compels them to spread the kingdom throughout the world. Ignoring all earthly government, refusing to yield the control of truth to either proscriptive or subsidizing states, indifferent to the resistance of the schools of worldly wisdom, they persevere in their errand to testify the truth, as it is in Jesus. The reconciliation of men to God through the Christ of Calvary is their consuming desire. To accomplish this the children of the kingdom follow, though at ever so great a distance, in the footsteps of the King. Poverty, disgrace, weariness and death itself, if needs be, are cheerfully endured to win subjects to the throne. In every land, amidst all civilizations, contested by multiform religions does this kingdom spread. Every advance is the enthronement of submission and surrender. It cometh not by observation. Its trophies may not be told in tale. Its subjects defy the criticism of ecclesiastical census-takers. The King alone knows

His own. But secretly within the scaffolding and present appearance of events and things is this temple rising in the light and love of God. The kingdom comes with every day. Like mystic fire does it seek to subdue all things to itself. The oppression, persecution, infidelity of this age are the fuel of love. They are consumed in the course of the King, who travels through time in the greatness of His strength. For in the labor of His true subject is the Lord incarnated. Every success is His inspiration. Disaster can only come through self-trust. He triumphs in his toil, who has been with Jesus and learned of Him. The nigher draws the King the more untiring is the warrior of love. He will not rest till the reign. There are enemies to be subdued at His feet. There are wanderers to be welcomed to His Cross. There are battle-mates to be cheered in the struggle. The slothful servant of such a sovereign is indeed wicked. The Master says: "Occupy till I come."*

For the privilege of this co-reign with Christ the experience of the believer on earth must be a suitable preparation. The more he ceases from self in

* Luke xix., 13.

all its forms, and surrenders his mind, heart, will and life to the Saviour's control the more surely does he vindicate his vocation. He who consents to be nothing, that grace may have all the glory, is close to the crown. That life, which computes itself as zero and prefixes Christ as its numeral, becomes rich in proportion to its estimate of Him, who is precious to all that believe. The vision is nearing! The King and the Throne! "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."*

*1 Peter iv., 13.

Break forth, O earth, in praises!
Dwell on His wondrous story;
The Saviour's name
And love proclaim—
The King who reigns in glory.
See on the throne beside Him,
O'er all her foes victorious,
His royal bride
For whom He died,
Like Him forever glorious.

Ye of the seed of Jacob!
Behold the Royal Lion
Of Judah's line,
In glory shine
And fill His throne in Zion.

Blest with Messiah's favor,
A ransom'd holy nation,
Your offerings bring
To Christ your King,
The God of your salvation.

Come, O ye kings! ye nations!
With songs of gladness hail Him;
Ye Gentiles all
Before Him fall,
The Royal Priest in Salem.
O'er hell and death triumphant,
Your conquering Lord hath risen,
His praises sound,
Whose power hath bound
Your ruthless foe in prison.

Hail to the King of glory!
Head of the new creation—
Thy ways of grace
We love to trace,
And praise thy great salvation.
Thy heart was prest with sorrow,
The bonds of death to sever,
To make us free,
That we might be
Thy crown of joy forever.

SIR EDWARD DENNY.

XIII.

Glory Begun Below.

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many : and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.—Heb. ix., 28.

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.—Luke xxi., 36.

Ye come behind in no gift : waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ : who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.—1 Cor. i., 7, 8.



WE have traced the successive stages of a believer's glorified experience after the resurrection from the dead, and the rapture through the skies. We have followed him in his presence before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and, his participation of the feast of love at the Marriage of the Lamb. We have forecasted his descent with the

Lord, and all His hosts of saints and angels, to execute judgment and enthrone righteousness among mortal men. And we have meditated upon the spirit and relations of the millennial reign which Messiah must maintain, until "the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."* The progress of our thought has been sustained by the testimony of God.

In the nature of things, we can know nothing concerning the future, except as He shall reveal it. Until the voice of the Spirit invites us, we dare not presume to look beyond the experience of the present, for the purposes of our God. But who is that deaf disciple, who will not hear "a trumpet talking, . . . which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter."† He must indeed be willingly ignorant, who declines to consider and credit the fulness of the teachings of God's Word in reference to the reserved portion of His redeemed people. They all cluster about, or rather converge in, the coming of the Lord. This is the final point of all unfulfilled prophecy and promise. Three hundred and eighteen passages in two hun-

* 1 Cor. xv., 28. † Revel. iv., 1.

dred and sixty chapters of the New Testament, or one verse in every twenty-five, are occupied with instruction about the appearing, the coming, the day and the reign of the Lord. Surely this large proportion of texts deserves, and of right demands, more patient study than has been given to them by the present generation of the church. It cannot be that we may safely ignore or pervert them. They embody the highest privileges and motives of the Christian life. To reject them is to impoverish one's self and the world. Moreover, the Spirit has spoken in terrible warning to those, who are tempted by waywardness and worldliness to turn away from their influence. "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth; but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom

which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”* Indifference to these revealed truths is impiety. They are declared to be needful not only to the higher frames but to the fact of acceptable service.

In our present meditation we propose to suggest, as the words of the Spirit shall guide us, some of the practical effects upon Christian character and life of a steadfast anticipation of the appearing of the Lord. With its sad consequences to the world lying in the wicked one, we have nothing to do. They who send messages into the far country, “saying, We will not have this Man to reign over us,”† may well dread the sudden conclusion of the dispensation of grace. It is only a knowledge that there is now a possible way to escape from damnation, which keeps godless men from despair. Procrastinators quiet their consciences with the insincere promise that, at some more convenient season, they will appropriate the salvation preached by the gospel. How lamentable will be their condition when the good news of grace are withdrawn from the

* Heb. xii., 25-28. † Luke xix., 14.

world, and the witness of the Holy Ghost is finished! To such "left" to live in the world, after believers have been transferred to the Glory, there can be only "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."* Besides, what a decline and degeneration of society must result from the removal of all true believers in Christ. They are now "the salt of the earth" and "lights in the world." Their conscious and unconscious influence put confessed restraints upon the workings of wickedness. So far as the gospel moulds public opinion, is vice frowned down and virtue applauded. In communities, throughout which this refining influence does not spread, the inherent evil of the heart of man holds high carnival without rebuke. Let unbelieving men asperse the church as they will, the most superficial observation recognizes the compulsory reverence paid by impurity to purity, infamy to integrity and crime to Christ. The body of holy brethren are "beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners," † even our enemies themselves being the judges. Who can describe the deepening dark-

* Heb. x., 27. † Song of Sol. vi., 4.

ness of the period, which shall be absolutely devoid of all Divine light, and intervene between the disappearance and the descent of the saints with the Lord? Horrors, such as we now only associate with hell, will make up the history of the earth. And when, having received the kingdom, the Nobleman returns, even a darker doom shall be declared. He shall say to them that surround Him: "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before Me."* Without doubt there is this awful aspect of the coming of the Lord, which appeals to the prudence of the ungodly of every generation, and is a powerful incentive to the zeal of the purchased people. They are most unwise who will not consider the possibility of its manifestation at any moment. The Master pleads: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."†

The believer's expectation of the appearing of the Lord is "full of glory." It is the inspiration of every excellence, the incentive to all endeavor

* Luke xix., 27. † Luke xxi., 34.

and the incitement to each deed of daring, which combine to form his character and fashion his life. The frequency, with which the promise occurs in the pages of the Word of God, gives a presumptive proof of this assertion, that will be found to be fully established, as we pursue carefully and critically an examination of separate passages. Can this oft-repeated assurance be, indeed, all a theory which a man may ignore, and yet be as developed in Christian character as though it were not written in the Word? Is it only a dogma, upon which exegetical scholars may employ their wits, and close their discussions with a drawn battle, without present influence upon either their own lives or those of others about them? How can any assertion find place on so many pages of scripture as does this, and yet be inconsequential to Christian life? Where is the parallel to this fact, which engages one twenty-fifth part of the whole New Testament, and yet possesses no practical importance or impressiveness? If you believe the record of the promise, what will it do for you? Rather, what will it not do for you? For we are bold to assert, on the testimony of the saints, that the anticipation of the second coming

of Jesus Christ, is a pre-eminent, if not the sole motive of Christian life. Like Simeon, "devout before God," in reference to the Lord's first manifestation, to be the consolation of Israel, are they that look for His second coming. With St. Peter, we are constantly reminded by it, "what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."*

It must be evident that the person of the Lord Jesus Christ attains a prominence in the thought and experience of those, who rejoice in this "blessed hope," far beyond that, which is possible under any other interpretation of these many texts. This is the sublime test of doctrine. The mission of the Holy Ghost is to glorify Jesus. Our privilege is to seek for "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The harmony of the Word and the health of the believer have the same necessity. The more Christ is exalted the nearer do we come to the mind of the Spirit. The intrusion of any secondary thought or thing between the saint and his Saviour, is not only impertinent but impious. They that "wait for the Lord from heaven"

* 2 Peter iii., 11.

are educated by the truth to a higher sense of responsibility to the Master. All obedience to earthly authority will be rendered "for the Lord's sake," whose personal rule so soon may be substituted for that, which is "sent by Him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well."* The exalted Jesus is the true sovereign of our lives. Submission is rendered to Him. Every mercy is recognized as His gift. Appeal from injustice is made to His throne. The homeliest duty has this high motive: "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."† This was the peculiar mark of the apostolic and the persecuted church, when believers looked for and hastened unto the coming of the Lord. A revival of the ancient doctrine must result in a quickening of the dormant spirit of surrender to Christ.

But the glorified Lord is the companion as well as the Master of those, who love His appearing. They realize His friendship. It is a fact, not a fiction. To

* 1 Peter ii., 14. † Col. iii., 23, 24

Him they refer their doubts. His words fault their fears. They have fellowship with Him in the love of the Father, and of all saints. Their knowledge of His resurrection and ascension banishes all dreaminess from their conception of His presence. Though we see Him not, yet is He none the less by our side. His grace and power are Himself. Just as every ray of light which streams from the sun, is inseparable from its disk, whether into the curtained room, down the depth of the earth shaft, or over the harvest field it prophecies and heralds the presence of the sun itself, so does every gift of Jesus' love introduce a new realization of the Man from the Glory in the life of the believer. This faith-vision is contrasted by the apostle with the unveiled glories of the Son of Man. Full of compensation as is its appreciation, the patient waiter for Christ has somewhat grander, in the outlook of his hope. "We are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight.)* This absent King is He, whom the Holy Ghost makes a spiritual and actual factor of the believer's experience.

* 2 Cor. v., 6, 7.

To all this must be added the emphasis given by this promise to the imparted life of the Christ, which by the new birth becomes the possession of every believer. Within himself he knows assuredly that Jesus Christ abides. With St. Paul he confesses ; " I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."* His new nature is the resurrection-life of Jesus Christ. The conflict with his flesh, in which "dwelleth no good thing," is maintained by the growth of this new and Divine life, which "cannot sin because he is born of God." Howsoever humbled in self and fearful at the motions of the sin that dwelleth within him, he has unshaken confidence in the certain control of that inner life, "that overcometh the world" and "doth not commit sin." His one absorbing concern is the development, by contemplation upon the exalted Lord and companionship with the spiritually revealed Christ, of that undying life, which shall at the Lord's coming be clothed upon with the body of glory. And then in the future for such a believer

* Gal. ii., 20 ; 2 Cor. xiii., 5.

there is nothing but Christ. It may be that he shall die. He does not dread it. He can never desire it. Indeed he rarely thinks about it. When forced upon his mind he receives it as the Master's will. But his prevailing anticipation is not a disembodied but a glorified residence with Christ, in which body, soul and spirit shall together share. Such association of life in, with, and for Christ cannot fail to secure an observed conformity to His example. He, who thus sets the Lord always before him, will be known and noted as "a man in Christ." This blessed hope annihilates all second causes and intermediate dispensations. "Christ is all and in all." Rutherford, in these choice words, expresses the experience of the Christian, "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:"* "I dare not accuse Himself—Christ—but His absence is a mountain of iron upon my heavy heart. O, when shall we meet? O, how long is it to the dawning of the marriage day! O, sweet Lord Jesus take long steps! O, my Lord, come over mountains at one stride! O, my beloved, flee like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of separation! O, that

* 1 Cor. i., 7.

He would fold the heavens together, like an old cloak, and shovel time and days out of the way, and make ready in haste the Lamb's wife for her Husband! Since He looked upon me my heart is not my own, He hath run away to heaven with it. How sweet is the wind that bloweth out of the quarter where Christ is! Every day we may see some new thing in Christ; His love hath neither brim nor bottom."

The anticipation of His appearing impels the believer to receive with assurance the accomplishments of the offices of Christ. All forms of legalism are utterly inconsistent with such an outlook of hope. If indeed it be true that the Lord may come at any moment to claim His own, then does a confidence in His redemption and the possession of "your own salvation"* become an imperative necessity of true prudence. They, who do not look for such things, may discount the testimony of God's Word and delay in the attainment of rest, but not so can he do, who in a second may be subjected to the test of eternity. By no company of Christians is attained so clear and discrim-

* Phil. ii., 12.

inating an apprehension of the great salvation, as among those who, withstood by this pressing problem, turn to the Word of God for a sufficient basis of peace and reason of hope. In all its literalness they accept that which God has said. The righteousness and death of their atoning Substitute they perceive to have covered the entire disk of the Divine law. Redemption was finished when Jesus hung upon the Cross. Through it the voice of reconciliation and love is heard. And now submissively and faithfully its mercy and merit are appropriated by the sinner. He claims, on the trustworthiness of Divine testimony, to be freely, fully and finally saved by the blood of the Crucified. The certificate of his release from the condemnation is read by him in the record of His Lord's resurrection. To this, with St. Paul, he appeals as the proof, that he is no longer in his sins, nor yet is his faith vain. Being represented in this Jesus, who was raised again for his justification, he has peace with God. His early experiences take him no farther than the Mount of Olives. The story of the ascension is a wonder to him, as it was to the first disciples. But temptation, trial and trouble are used by the Divine

Spirit to interpret the meaning of this marvel. As He has been crucified, counted dead and conjoined in resurrection with Christ, so now does he perceive his union of privilege with the exalted Saviour. His standing before God is complete in the Beloved. His state of experience may be ever so unsatisfactory. These are two separate relations, which he recognizes to be clearly discriminated in the Divine mind. In Christ, the assessor and advocate, he claims absolute security. Sympathy for his sorrow, succor for his struggles and strength in his weakness come to him by that faith, which identifies him with the great High Priest. The intercession of Jesus in the Glory is the refuge of such a believer, whenever overtaken by sin. Every sense of forgiveness is the outgrowth of his oneness through the Word with Him, who is "the propitiation for our sins." Every short-coming in service is more than compensated by the offering of His merit. Every supplication for gifts and graces is prevalent through the mingled incense of His mysterious advocacy. There is no monopoly in this grace of assurance. It is secured, not by effort and striving, but by a trust.

that accepts as absolute truth, which neither man nor devils have permission to dispute, the Master's own words: "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." * His faith gives their full force to the tenses of the verbs, chosen by the Spirit. Every preparation for the appearing is to be found in Christ. From all self-torment he ceases, and commences to give "thanks unto God, the Father, which hath made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood." Thus, "instead of striving to settle the question of his salvation, he learns to his unspeakable joy that it has been settled for him by the blood of Christ, and resting upon the finished work accomplished on the cross, and accepted according to the value which the Father places upon that work, he no longer dreads the thought of his Lord's return, because he already stands complete in Him, who of God is made unto

* John v., 24.

us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” *

The fulness of the liberty of the glory of the children of God † will be revealed when Jesus comes. But the believer already possesses foretastes of its blessedness and brightness. The day-spring from on high hath visited him. The morning hours of the eternal day are already his. Glory has begun below. And “in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” ‡ Then shall be the perfect noon. He tells off the times of his trial and toil by the dial of the promises. All shadows fall into forgetfulness as he faces this developing light. All successes shorten the interval of watching and waiting before the rest. The gains and losses, the frowns and flatteries, the caresses and curses, which unite to form his biography on earth, have lost their power either to elate or annoy him. One purpose prevails in all his experience. He will “walk in the light as He is in the light,” that he “may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.” § Never a miser counted with so much covetousness

* J. H. Brookes, in *Maranatha*. † Rom. viii., 21 ‡ Matt. xxiv., 44. § Phil. i., 10.

his wealth, as does the patient waiter for the Lord tell off the tale of his possessions. The world, life, death, things present, things to come; all are his, for he is Christ's and Christ is God's. His mercies outnumber his needs. He hears more calls to thanksgiving than to prayer. There are no clouds in his heaven. The God of grace has blotted them out forever.* There are no cares in his life. The ascended Lord careth for him.† There can be no anxiety in his soul. He is confident of this very thing that He, who hath begun a good work in him "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."‡ There can come no fear in his future. He echoes the confession of St. Paul: "I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."§ So swiftly speeds time, while "every man that hath this hope in Him (of seeing Him and being like Him at His appearing) purifieth himself, even as He is pure."||

One pain more and Jesus may be here! Perchance a single struggle with sin, Satan and self, before the

* Isaiah, xliv., 22; xliii., 25. † 1 Peter v., 7. ‡ Phil. i., 6. § 2 Tim. i., 12.
|| 1 John iii., 3.

Lord will be by our side ! Who shall be the last soul won for Christ by us before He comes ? The Christian, who anticipates death, never thinks it near. It is the universal delusion of our race to count all men mortal but ourselves. There is no impulse to patience and zeal in such an expectation. Indeed as the years increase the power of the motive is dissipated. Youth trembles more by the side of the grave than tottering age. Besides the gospel will outlive his life. This is the self-comforting creed of such a believer, as he looks upon his unsaved friends. His labor for others' salvation will be supplemented by succeeding ministries. And so he inevitably relaxes effort. Let him once apprehend the imminence of the Lord's appearing, and how instantly must his plan of life be changed. "Quickly" is the word, which expresses both his hope and obligation. Whilst there is time he would do good unto all men. The hours of his day of grace must be divided by moments. Mayhap one more, and then—the glory ! What an inspiring hope is this ! There is no time for tarrying or trifling—the Lord cometh ! Well wrote Richard Baxter : " If I were but sure that I should live to see the coming of the Lord, it would

be the joyfullest tidings to me in the world. O that I might see His kingdom come ! It is the characteristic of His saints to love His appearing and to look for that blessed hope. The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly, is the language of faith and hope and love."

Let not my eyes with tears be dim,
Let joy their upward glance illumine ;
Look up, and watch, and wait for Him—
Soon, soon the Lord will come.

Soon will that star-paved milky way,
Soon will that beauteous azure dome,
Glories, ne'er yet conceived display—
Soon, soon the Lord will come.

Changed in the twinkling of an eye,
Invested with immortal bloom,
I shall behold Him throned on high,
And sing, " The Lord is come ! "

One beam from His all-glorious face
These mortal garments will consume,
Each sinful blemish will efface—
Lord Jesus, quickly come !

What will it be with Thee to dwell,
Thyself my everlasting home !
Oh bliss—oh joy ineffable !
Lord Jesus, quickly come !

C. ELLIOTT.

XIV.

Then Cometh the End.

Heaven and earth shall pass away.—Mark xiii., 31.

Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.—Isaiah lxx., 17.



PROPHECY is a Divine picture of events that must be hereafter. For its intelligent apprehension it is needful that careful attention should be given to the law of perspective. The facts figured in the foreground are so fully discriminated, that they may be readily understood in their reality and relations. Beyond these are portrayed other predictions, which present conceptions of the Divine fore-knowledge, that amaze more than they instruct. The outline of this light and

shadow is in relief upon bold masses of cloud-land, which make the background of the Designer's work. But for this far removed region, in which curiosity and conjecture have their pastime, the truths that we have traced in these pages could not have attained their clearly determined manifestation. The uncertainty of the events, which shall come with the end, fore-shortens the facts, ready to be revealed. The effect of the whole revelation is dependent upon the mystery and majesty of that which is reserved. Our knowledge at the best is comparative. When in the study of the Divine Word we reach the closing portions of the sacred volume we can only bow in reverence before the Lord, who half conceals while He half makes plain His purposes. When we shall have been glorified in the Kingdom of Christ then will we be capable to comprehend the substance, which now we study in symbol. Truth enough has been taught us about the events, that are nigh at hand. For the details of the dispensation, which shall succeed the millennium, we must wait until God shall speak again.

And yet in these distant prophecies there are not deficient clearly determined features and figures

of excellent glory. To these, in the words of the Spirit, we invite prayerful attention. They represent events which will wed the thousand years of reign to the eternity. The end will be the beginning.

After the thousand years the devil must be loosed out of his prison a little season.*

“Three days the Prince of Darkness, day and night,
Though night was now what day had once appear’d,
Flew with disastrous pinion to and fro
Over the renovated earth. No shore
Escaped his gloomy visitation. Straight
From Arctic to Antarctic climes he pass’d,
And in the dubious light from East to West,
Only so steering his pernicious course
As to avoid Emmanuel’s saintly land,
Outstripp’d the rising sun. The glorious sight
Fill’d him with envy and amaze: so soon
His footprints, as it seem’d, had been effaced;
So transient evil’s film; so naturally
Goodness and mercy had reclaim’d their own.
Not that the sparse and rare remains of ill
Escaped his sympathetic eye, or fail’d
To awaken pleasure in the Evil One:
But these were few and far. The earth was full
Of gladness; and her hymns of ceaseless praise,
Rich with the music of his Rival’s name,
Grated worse discord in his ear than all
Hell’s wailings.”†

Satan “shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and

* Rev. xx., 3. † Yesterday, To-day and Forever—E. H. Bickersteth.

Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented for ever and ever.*

“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it.”†

“The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”‡ They “shall come forth” “they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.”§ They “shall awake . . . to shame and everlasting contempt.”||

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works and whosoever was not found written in the book of

* Rev. xx., 8-10. † *Ibid*, 11. ‡ *Ibid*, 5. § John v., 29. || Daniel xii., 1.

life was cast into the lake of fire,”* “the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”† “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.”‡ “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”§

“The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and all the works that are therein shall be burned up.”|| “The heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment.”¶ “As a vesture shalt thou fold them up and they shall be changed.”** From the face of Him that sat on the Throne, “the earth and the heaven fled away: and there was found no place for them.”††

“And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.”‡‡ “Behold, I create new heaven and a new earth.”§§ “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no

* Rev. xx., 12-15. † Mark ix., 43. ‡ Rev. xx., 14. § 1 Cor. xv., 26. || 2 Peter iii., 10. ¶ Isaiah li., 6. ** Heb. i., 12. †† Rev. xx., 11. ‡‡ Rev. xxi., 5. §§ Isaiah lxx., 17.

more sea.”* “New heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”†

“Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father : when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”‡

What an earth will this be on that Festival Day ! Purified by fire, fruitful as Eden, beautiful in the sunshine from unknown skies and crowned with the Divine presence—glorified bodies could ask no better home than such a world will be. If it be true that, in company with the whole solar system, our earth is transported through one hundred and fifty-four millions of miles of space in each year, then physically we are entering into the inconceivable glories of new heavens. The Word of God is echoed by the discovery of man. What wonders may dawn upon our planet when the end of the mediatorial

* Revel. xxi., 1. † 2 Peter iii., 13. ‡ 1 Cor. xv., 24, 28.

reign shall have come ! Fancy frets at its impotence to conceive all that may be. Faith is content with the certainty of that which will be.

Oh, past are the Fast Days, the Feast Day, the Feast Day is come,

The solitude endeth, the Guest most beloved is come.

Deserted one, thou hast deserted thy desert at last !

O love! the Beloved, who cannot desert thee, is come ;

And sever'd the severing ; departed for ever the parting ;

And met is the meeting : the One, the most blessed, is come !

The fleeting has fled ; the ban of the Exile is banish'd ;

Far distant the distance ; the Bird to the nestlings is come !

The Moon to the sky, to the desolate garden the Rose,

To the palace forsaken the King in his glory is come,

The Life to the root, and the Sap to the height of the tree :

The Wreath to the sprays, and the Crown to the branches, is come !

And now let him come ; the assaulter who fain would assault me ;

I am safe in the Tower ; my Tower of shelter is come !

Now cast on me ever and ever the fire of love ;

I fear not the fire ; my Robe of Asbestos is come !

As soon as they heard it, that Thou with salvation wert nigh :

Behold every heart, heavy laden with sorrow, is come !

O Vessel of Fulness, pour'd out for the thirst of the worlds,

We thank Thee, we thank Thee ! to us Thy refreshing is come !

For long came no breeze to the deserts unblest ; and now One

With wings which the dew of all blessing has moisten'd, is come !

We have waited till voice of the Spring should awaken the dead :

Behold, from the East to the West the Spring-glory is come !

FROM THE GERMAN.

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